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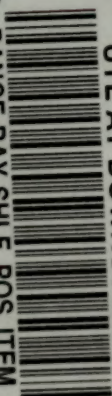
# HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

1485-1580, A.D.

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*P. Kern*

A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE,

A.D. 1485—1580.



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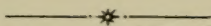
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A HISTORY OF  
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BY

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AUTHOR OF 'A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE FROM 1660 TO 1714,'  
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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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THIS book has been specially written for the use of students who are required to prepare the *history* of English literature in the period with which it deals; such students are not as a rule closely acquainted with the works written during the period, and must of necessity take a good deal of their knowledge of them at second-hand. There are, however, certain works with which the reader (even if his desire is only to pass an examination) ought to have a more intimate acquaintance than can be derived from merely reading *about* them, and therefore the following very short list of works written between 1485 and 1580, from which the student is advised to select his reading, is here given; only those editions are mentioned which are inexpensive and easily obtainable:

More's 'Utopia' (Robinson's translation), published by Arber, 1s.

Udall's 'Ralph Roister Doister,' published by Arber, 6d.

'Tottel's Miscellany' (Wyatt, Surrey, Grimald, etc.), published by Arber, 2s. 6d.

Ascham's 'Toxophilus' and 'The Schoolmaster' (Arber, 1s. each).

Latimer's Sermons, 'The Ploughers' (Arber, 6d.).

or, 'Seven Sermons before Edward VI.' (Arber, 1s. 6d.).

or, 'Sermons on the Card' (in Cassell's National Library, 3d.).

Lyly's 'Euphues' (Arber, 4s.).

Spenser's 'Shepherd's Calendar' (in the *Globe* Edition, Macmillan, 3s. 6d.).

Of Skelton, Hawes, Berners, Tyndale, More (English work), Elyot, Surrey's 'Æneid,' Sackville, Gascoigne, and of the Scotch poets, extracts are given in Professor Skeat's 'Specimens of English Literature, 1394-1579' (*Clarendon Press*, 7s. 6d.), which the student should read carefully. The first volume of 'The English Poets' (Macmillan, 4 vols., 7s. 6d. each) will also be found useful. To each specimen critical notices are affixed, and some of these are very good.

# HISTORY OF LITERATURE.

1485—1580.

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## CHAPTER I.

### Literature under the First Two Tudors.

THE brief period which we are now about to study links mediæval to modern English literature, for we enter it with Hawes and we quit it with Surrey, spending much of the time on our way with More. These three names are here mentioned as seeming to be typical of the bulk of the writings of the age: Hawes is taken as the poet who stands on the hithermost verge of the Middle Ages, and is scarcely, if at all, affected by the striving for a wider and higher culture which characterizes his younger contemporaries; More is the central figure of the New Learning before the Reformation and of the fierce controversial literature engendered by the politico-religious strife of Henry VIII.'s reign; Surrey (with Wyatt) gives us the poetic first-fruits of the Renaissance.

‘The honour of our English tongue is dead,’ wrote Occleve, the loving but not brilliant disciple of Chaucer, on the death of the master (1400). It seemed as if these words were likely to prove true, for during the whole of the next hundred years—the age, be it remembered, of the Wars of the Roses—no Englishman can be mentioned who deserves

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The End of  
English  
Mediæval  
Poetry.



the name of poet ; indeed, the only writer in verse who need be spoken of at all is Lydgate, the monk of Bury. He was a younger contemporary of Chaucer, and lived till past the middle of the fifteenth century. The opinion of his contemporaries and of the generation or two after his death put him on a level with Gower (which was perhaps justifiable), and with Chaucer (which was absurd). Lydgate was not, we may note in passing, an imitator so much as an emulator of Chaucer ; but he drew his inspiration—such as it was—largely from the French poets, who had also afforded models for Chaucer for one class (by no means the best) of his writings. Lydgate's position is slightly touched on here, because we shall find that Hawes is his avowed disciple, though something more than a mere copyist. Hawes, as has been said, may perhaps be justly looked on as the last of the mediæval poets, for it is scarcely necessary to regard as of any importance that portion of Skelton's work which belongs to the older school.

We have seen that the fifteenth century was barren of all good poetry in England ; further north, however, the case is different. James I. of Scotland  
The Scotch Poets. (d. 1437) is a talented pupil of Chaucer, whilst Henryson (d. about 1490) is a far more original and poetical one. With Dunbar, a poet of real genius, and with Gawain Douglas (both of whose works fall entirely within this period) the direct Chaucerian succession in Scotland may be said to end ; but, nevertheless, Chaucer's influence is strong over much of the work of Lyndesay, who, though by no means a poet of a high order, is interesting as a man whose writings powerfully reflect the varied movements of his lifetime.

Of prose during the fifteenth century nothing has been said, because that age produced none of any value as literature, or which has any bearing on the  
The Beginnings of the Renaissance in England. literature of the time which we wish more particularly to study. But three events towards the close of this sterile fifteenth century demand our notice before we attempt to survey the literature of later times. In 1476 Caxton set up a printing

press at Westminster; in 1491 Grocyn began to teach Greek at Oxford; in 1492 Columbus brought to Europe the tidings of a new world. A new world it was, in fact, that each of these pioneers brought us in contact with. On the work of the sailor and the printer there is no need to dwell long here; the discoveries of new lands and the hope of discoveries yet to be made turned the thoughts of men to larger views of the physical universe, and brought into English life and letters that spirit of adventure that begins to stir with the beginning of the fifteenth century, and breathes through many of the best (and not only the best) works of 'the spacious times of great Elizabeth;' the printer's craft caused books to appeal to a far larger public than could ever have been possible before, and while of itself it was a stimulus to the production of literature, it was opportunely introduced at such a time as to be ready when literature and learning could best profit by it. Even more important than the printer and the adventurer in connection with the early seed-time of the English Renaissance is the scholar. Let us for a moment watch his proceedings under the early Tudors.

Grocyn had learned his Greek at Florence, the home of classical culture in the fifteenth century, when lettered Greeks, wandering from their decaying fatherland, found its literature fitly cherished at the court of the Medici, and of many another Italian prince. The taking of Constantinople by the Turks (1453) drove forth fresh bands of Greeks to their brothers in exile in Italy. That country had produced no fine native literature in the fifteenth century, belying, like England, the magnificent promise of the fourteenth; but in learning and culture it was far in advance of us. When Grocyn returned to England, he found a few Englishmen ready to learn from him, and a few more who, imitating his example, sought culture in Italy itself; so that before the end of the fifteenth century the intellect of a young man such as More might possibly nourish itself on Greek philosophy and Greek poetry, instead of starving on the arid productions of the

The New  
Learning.



Schoolmen, or the watery effusions of the imitators of Lydgate, as must have been the case a decade or two earlier. The influence of the small knot of English scholars, whom we find in the early part of the sixteenth century, is of far more importance than the direct instruction they gave, for the higher standards of style and form they spread abroad would, of course, affect many a man who knew 'little Latin and less Greek.' The actual number of classical scholars increases steadily throughout the reign of Henry VIII.—a young and cultured king, from whom learning might hope much—and the educational foundations of the time bear witness to the interest felt by the sovereign and the wealthier classes in the New Learning.<sup>1</sup>

It seemed, indeed, at one time as if the fierce political and social upheaval which brought about and accompanied the Reformation would sweep away the newly-awakened love for letters; but happily this was not the case. Some of the older scholars and friends of letters, such as More and Fisher, were stanch adherents of the old order, but in the hands of others, and especially the younger ones, the

The Reform-  
ation and  
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sance.

<sup>1</sup> 'We have the imposing testimony of Erasmus [who had paid his first visit to Oxford in 1497, and is said by some to have learned Greek, by others to have taught Greek there—neither of which statements has any evidence to support it] that neither France nor Germany stood so high about this period [1520-30] as England. That country, he says, so distant from Italy, stands next to it in the esteem of the learned. [About 1520] we can produce a not very small number of persons possessing a competent acquaintance with Greek. . . . Such were Grocyn, the patriarch of English learning, who died in 1519; Linaere, whose translation of Galen, first printed in 1521, is one of the few in that age that escape censure for inelegance or incorrectness; [William] Latimer, beloved and admired by his friends, but of whom we have no memorial in any writings of his own; More [see p. 27], known as a Greek scholar by epigrams of some merit; Lilly, master of St. Paul's School, who had acquired Greek at Rhodes, but whose reputation is better preserved by the [Latin] Grammar that bears his name [in which, however, he was assisted by Erasmus and Colet]; Lupsett, who is said to have learned from Lilly, and who taught some time at Oxford; Richard Croke [a pupil of Grocyn, who taught Greek from 1514-18 at Leipzig, and subsequently at Cambridge]; Gerard Lister, a physician, to whom Erasmus gives credit for skill in three languages; Pace and Tunstall, both men well known in the history of those times; Lee and Stokesley, afterwards bishops, the former of whom published Annotations on the Greek Testament of Erasmus in 1520; and Gardiner, Tyndale . . . and a few more' (Hallam). [The words in square brackets are condensations or additions.] Two other scholars of Henry VIII.'s reign may be mentioned here, viz., Thomas Smith (afterwards knighted when secretary of state to Elizabeth), who became Greek lecturer at Cambridge in 1533, and introduced a new style of pronunciation; and John Cheke (afterwards knighted), who succeeded Smith, and was the first Regius Professor of Greek (1540). Ascham (see p. 53) was one of his most distinguished pupils.

New Learning was a powerful weapon to use against Romanism. Some of these it was who turned their knowledge to good account by translating the Scriptures into the vernacular, so that we may fairly regard the English Bibles of Henry VIII.'s reign as the joint offspring of the Reformation and the revival of learning in England.<sup>1</sup> A vast quantity of vigorous prose and verse is connected more or less directly with the reform of abuses in the Church; thus Skelton's fierce invective in his own peculiar metre is directed against Wolsey as the all-powerful court-cardinal, but in no way against the Church, of which the satirist is himself a priest; while Roy, on the other hand—quondam Franciscan friar and co-worker with Tyndale in his English version of the Bible—attacks both cardinal and Church with a vigour and scurrility fully equal to Skelton's, though without a tithe of the latter's ability. More, who succeeded Wolsey in the chancellorship and the hatred of the reformers, is the ablest of the few scholarly writers in English who uphold the old Church against Tyndale and the reformers, whilst, on the other side, Hugh Latimer's oratory is as remarkable for its form as its matter; to him, we incline to

<sup>1</sup> The Bibles of Henry VIII.'s reign are;

- (a) The version of the New Testament, the Pentateuch, etc., by Tyndale, 1526-31, see p. 31.
- (β) A complete version of the whole Bible, by Miles Coverdale (1485-1568), which appeared in 1535, practically incorporating Tyndale's version, with additional translation (but not apparently from the original languages) of the parts not done by him.
- (γ) Matthew's (or Rogers') Bible, 1537, which was not much more than a revised version of Coverdale's.
- (δ) Cromwell's Bible, so called from its being issued under the auspices of Thomas Cromwell in 1539: it was the work of Coverdale, 'truly translated after the verity of the Hebrew and Greek texts by the diligent study of divers excellent learned men, expert in the foresaid tongues,' and was based on his earlier edition. It may claim to be, with Taverner's Bible (a revised edition of Matthew's), the earliest 'authorized version.'
- (ε) In 1540 a version sanctioned by still higher authority appeared. This was Cramer's Bible, which was translated under the direction of the archbishop, with a 'prologue' written by himself. The Prayer-Book version of the Psalms is taken from this.

In the early years of Elizabeth's reign two famous Bibles appear, viz.:

- (a) *The Geneva Bible* (1560), the work of English Protestants—e.g., Coverdale, Gilby, Whittingham, etc.—who had fled from the Marian persecutions. This was issued with annotations which, being of a severely Calvinistic nature, made the version long a favourite with English Puritans and Scotch Presbyterians.
- (β) *The Bishops' Bible* (1568), which was translated, under the superintendence of Archbishop Parker, by several bishops, and was the official Church of England version until the Authorized Version of 1611.

think, must be given the credit of having produced the finest prose that is to be found in our language before the latter half of Elizabeth's reign. On the whole, perhaps, the actual literary value of the bulk of the writing connected with the Reformation is but slight; the services, however, rendered by it to English literature are considerable, for it forced the author, however scholarly, who wished to appeal to a native audience, to substitute English for Latin,<sup>1</sup> and thus the first attempts on any considerable scale at writing English prose belong to this time; we shall not, therefore, look for polished literary form or great stylistic achievements in the prose works of the period. We must remember that they are mostly 'introductory exercises,' that the writers used a language which afforded few models which they could safely imitate, and that as yet they were unaware of the grandeur of that language for prose purposes. With few exceptions, the prose writers of this time and of the subsequent quarter century either write as if with difficulty in a strange tongue, or else they pay little or no attention to the language they use, though the best of them endeavour (and often manage) to express themselves with great clearness. But for the part that rhythm and cadence play in the structure of sentences and the expression of thought we shall generally look in vain.

And here, perhaps, is the place for a word or two on the state of the language itself, on which matter we cannot do better than consider the words of  
The New  
Language.
Professor Skeat: 'About the end of the fourteenth century French words ceased to be introduced into the language in such numbers as before, and the question as to which of them should be accepted and which rejected was soon more or less settled. . . . Down to the time of the Wars of the Roses we find three distinct and well-marked literary dialects of English—the Northern, the Midland, and the Southern; but the result of that struggle gave the ascendancy to the Midland dialect, which then became the literary dialect, and has

<sup>1</sup> Thus More, for example, writes his 'Utopia' for the delectation of the cultured few in Lat'n; but his tracts and pamphlets, for a wider English public, in the vernacular.



ever since so remained. . . . The introduction of printing did very much to *fix* the language, and the result has been that the language of the fifteenth century differs less from that of the nineteenth than the language of the fourteenth from that of the thirteenth.' One way in which it is easy to illustrate this is to observe that, while modernizing the spelling utterly ruins the metre of Chaucer, by depriving it of many flectional syllables (especially those which end in *e*), the modernizing of the spelling of Hawes or Surrey makes no difference to the metre, though here and there it will spoil a rhyme, for the *pronunciation* of the vowels in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries differs considerably from that now in use. It must be remembered, moreover, in the case of many words we have indulged in the tendency to throw the accent further back, so that, for example, many words which scan with us as trochees we shall find in the writers of this age as iambs. The student will observe also that coincident with the rise and progress of the revival of learning is the borrowing of new words directly from Latin and Greek sources.

From the New Learning and the new language we turn to consider the new forms of verse that found their way into our language towards the end of Henry VIII.'s reign. The chief of these we owe to Surrey, who first wrote English blank verse, and to the same poet and his friend Wyatt, who naturalized the sonnet. The work of these two poets marks the beginning of what is sometimes called the Second<sup>1</sup> Italian Influence. Their writings, besides possessing considerable poetic merit, mark a distinct epoch in the history of the development of the form of English verse, for both of which reasons we must study them in some detail in a subsequent chapter.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The label 'Period of the *First* Italian Influence' is sometimes affixed to the latter part of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century. The student will remember that Chaucer's later work is said to reflect it powerfully.

<sup>2</sup> Of the drama nothing is said here, for it can scarcely be said to exist. A brief sketch of the development of dramatic literature under the Tudors, up to the year 1580, is given in Chapters IV. and VII., pp. 34 and 59.

## CHAPTER II.

### The Poets, from Hawes to Surrey.

ALL that we know of Hawes' life may be told in one sentence: Educated at Oxford, he is known to have travelled in France, and to have been groom of the chamber under Henry VII. The dates of his birth and death are not known with certainty, though those given in the margin are doubtless near the truth.

Stephen  
Hawes,  
1483-1520.

Hawes' chief work—the only one by which he is remembered—compendiously described on its title-page as 'The History of Graund Amoure and La Bel Pucell, called the Pastime of Pleasure, containing the Knowledge of the Seven Sciences and the Course of Man's Life in this World,' seems to have been written about 1506. The title thus quoted at length fairly describes the contents of this long allegorical poem, of which a somewhat more detailed account may interest the student. The knight, Graund Amoure (who narrates the story), is told by Fame of the fair lady, La Bel Pucell, and determines to win her. Fame encourages him, but bids him first go to the Tower of Doctrine, giving him as guides Governance and Grace; Doctrine receives him kindly, and sends him to each of her 'seven daughters most expert in cunning'—viz., Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Arismetrik (*i.e.*, Arithmetic), Music, Geometry, and Astronomy,<sup>1</sup> and thus the poet has the opportunity (which he certainly does not let slip) of dilating on each of these various studies.

<sup>1</sup> The first three of these form the *Trivium*, and the last four the *Quadrivium*; these seven together compose the mediæval academic curriculum.



In the Tower of Music, Graund Amoure beholds La Pucell; after a 'dolorous and lowly disputation' between them, the lady grants the knight her love, but he is to keep it secret from her friends, who presently come to take her away. Graund Amoure is let into the Tower of Chivalry by Fortitude; he goes into the Temple of Mars, where he hears an argument between that god and Fortune, and is subsequently made a knight by King Melizus at the advice of Minerva. Graund Amoure then departs to seek adventures; he falls in with one Godfrey Gobelive, who is a defamer of women, for which before long the rascal is seized by Correction and well whipped.<sup>1</sup> The knight continues his career; he overthrows a giant with three heads (Falsehood, Crafty Imagination, Perjury), and then another with seven. Finally, after ridding the earth of a hideous metal monster made by enchantment, he is married to the Bel Pucell. He lives with her in great happiness for awhile, till 'a fair old man' enters his chamber and 'arrests' him; it was Age, bringing with him Policy and Avarice, whom the knight makes his companions.

'But when I thought longest to endure,  
 Death with his dart arrest me suddenly;  
 "Obey!" he said, "as ye may be sure  
 You can resist nothing the contrary  
 But that you must obey me naturally.  
 What you avaieth such treasure to take  
 Sithens by force ye must it now forsake?"'

So Death carries him off (not perhaps leaving the reader altogether inconsolable), and Remembrance makes his 'epitaphy.' Fame comes into the temple, discourses of the mighty dead, and promises that—

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<sup>1</sup> This incident, which is evidently intended to be humorous, is described in rhyming deasyllabic couplets—the older 'riding rime,' the later 'heroic couplet'—a metre which Hawes handles very tunely. The bulk of the work is in the seven-lined stanza, of which a specimen is given above, and whose construction will be obvious to the student who examines that specimen. That form of stanza is a favourite one with Chaucer and the poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; it has received the names of 'Chaucer's Stanza,' 'Troilus Verse,' and 'Rime Royal'—the first from its introducer and most celebrated wielder, the second from the fact that he wrote his 'Troilus and Criseyde' in it; the last from its employment by his follower, James I. of Scotland. Chaucer, we may note, borrowed it from the French poet, Machault.

'Of Graund Amoure, my knight in specia  
His name shall dure and be eternal.'

The work closes with a 'virtuous exhortation' from Eternity, and an apology from the author. In the last verse we find Hawes

'Beseeching God for to give me grace  
Bookës to compile of moral virtue,  
Of my master Lydgate to follow the trace ;'

and this is characteristic: Hawes' two great objects in poetry are to teach 'moral virtue,' and to follow Lydgate, whose disciple he delights to call himself at every opportunity. Under these circumstances we can scarcely expect his poetry to be of a very high order; but we should do wrong to pass over him with contempt: his faults and his merits lie very close together, for while we often find in him 'a sweet simplicity, a pensive air, a subdued cheerfulness which have a strange charm at this distance of dissimilar time,'<sup>1</sup> we are also apt to find his simplicity degenerating into vapidness, his pensive air resembling a sleepy one, and his cheerfulness approaching a very irritating self-complacency. Of tediousness and prolixity, he is also often accused, but this arises more perhaps from our lack of interest in both the matter and form of his work, than from any special defect on the part of the poet; a long poem treating of subjects which do not appeal to us, in a style altogether out of harmony with the literary standards of our own day, is apt to seem both tedious and prolix, when its author is not a man of genius; Hawes' master, Lydgate, seems

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churton Collins, in an excellent critical notice inserted before a selection from Hawes in 'The English Poets,' ed. Ward. It may, perhaps, be thought that we have given too much space to Hawes, compared with what has been allotted to some other writers. The student will remember, however, that Hawes' peculiar position in literature makes him of more importance as regards its history than some writers of greater gifts. Moreover, as even the above analysis shows, there is sufficient resemblance of an elementary nature between the 'Pastime of Pleasure' and the 'Fairy Queen' to make some acquaintance with the former desirable. 'The two poems are,' as Mr. Collins says, 'similar in allegorical purpose, similar in the development of their allegory. Some of the incidents, though not identical, are of the same character, and if it would be going too far to say that Spenser was a disciple of Hawes, it would not be going too far to say that Spenser had been a careful student of the 'Pastime of Pleasure,' had been indebted to it for many a useful hint, many a slight preliminary sketch, many a pleasing effect of rhythm and cadence.'

to us a much greater sinner in that direction than his pupil.<sup>1</sup>

Of Skelton's life the following are the chief known facts: He was educated at Oxford (and perhaps also at Cambridge), and entered the Church. He was tutor to Prince Henry (afterward Henry VIII.), with whom he seems to have been a favourite, and he was given the rectory of Diss in Norfolk.

John  
Skelton,  
about  
1460-1529.

He was undoubtedly a man of considerable learning, but it is alleged that he led an evil life; possibly he owes this reputation to the foes his satires made for him. His invective against Wolsey caused the powerful cardinal to order the poet's arrest; but the latter fled, and taking sanctuary at Westminster (1522-23), died there in 1529, the year of his enemy's fall.

Skelton's fame is due chiefly to his 'Phyllyp Sparrowe,' on the one hand, and on the other to his satirical writings, notably 'The Boke of Colyn Clout,' and 'Why come ye not to Court?' The first of these is a graceful elegy on the death of a bird, which belonged to 'goodly mistress Jane' (Scrope), who laments the death of her pet; the poet adds a delicate and pretty description of the fair Jane, who

'is the violet,  
The daisy delectable,  
The columbine commendable,  
The gillyflower amicable;  
For this goodly flower,  
This blossom of fresh colour,  
So Jupiter me succour,  
She flourisheth new and new  
In beauty and virtue.'

The metre in which the above (like all Skelton's best work) is written is now known as 'Skeltonical'; the student will observe that it consists of rhyming couplets, and that the normal line has three accents and six syllables; but that variations in the number of accents and

<sup>1</sup> The student, however, who is not acquainted with Lydgate's and Hawes' works at first hand may take the contrary view on the authority of Scott, who calls Hawes' 'ten times more tedious than his original.'

Hawes' other works need scarcely be named: the chief are, 'The Conversion of Swearers,' 'The Example of Virtue,' and 'A Joyful Meditation of all England.'



of syllables are frequent : alliteration is a marked feature of his verse, and three or more lines often rhyme together.<sup>1</sup> On the nature of his verse, with its peculiar defects, and the merits which especially fit it for satire, the poet says,

‘ —though my rime be ragged,  
Tattered and jagged,  
Rudely rain-beaten,  
Rusty and moth-eaten,  
If ye take well therewith,  
It hath in it some pith.’

The above lines are from ‘ Colyn Clout,’ a satire directed against the vices of the clergy and the abuses of the Church ; the object of the satirist (he declares) is only to make men mend their ways : he takes upon him ‘ thus copiously to write ’ out of no malice, nor (he says) does he rebuke any virtuous man. It is worth noticing that he is no favourer of the ‘ reforming ’ views in religion as he makes especially evident by his lines in ‘ Colyn Clout,’ against those who favour the new doctrines.<sup>2</sup> Skelton’s delineation of Wolsey in ‘ Why come ye not to Court?’ written with the express purpose of stirring up against the king’s favourite the great nobles of the day who

‘ Dare not look out at door,  
For dread of the mastiff cur,  
For dread of the butcher’s dog,’

forms part of one of the most skilful and scathing personal invectives in our language : the writer seems carried away by the intensity of his hatred for vice, rather than by personal spite ; his verse, which rushes on like a foaming mountain-stream, leaping from crag to crag, has a

<sup>1</sup> The approximate date of ‘ Phyllyp Sparrowe ’ is fixed by the fact that Alexander Barclay (d. 1552) mentions it slightly in the ‘ Ship of Fools,’ 1508. This work is a translation from the ‘ Narrenschiff ’ of Sebastian Brandt ; but Barclay added to and altered his original considerably. Barclay also translated and adapted from French and Latin : his ‘ Eclogues,’ partly translated from Mantuan (see p. 47, *note*), partly original, are among his more respectable productions.

<sup>2</sup> He inveighs against those who

‘ Have a smack  
Of Luther’s sack,  
And a burning spark  
Of Luther’s work,  
And are somewhat suspect  
In Luther’s sect,’

as well as against Wiclifites, Hussians, etc.

singular power of carrying the reader with it. The poet is declamatory and denunciatory merely; he appeals to our emotions to join him in making head against the 'mad Amalek,' against whom he brings accusation upon accusation, not to convince us of the cardinal's wickedness, of which he takes it for granted we are assured, but to force us to feel as strongly on the subject as he himself does. The whole poem is a cry, but not an hysterical one.

Of Skelton's other work little need here be said. Among his 'Skeltonic' writings, 'Ware the Hawk' is an invective against a priest with whom he has a personal quarrel; while 'in "The Tunning of Elinore Rummyng"' his powers of pure description and his skill in the lower walks of comedy are seen in their highest perfection.<sup>1</sup> Skelton also wrote a large number of other works, not in his own peculiar metre, and not of great value. Such are his moralities<sup>2</sup>—*e.g.*, 'Magnificence,' his allegorical satiric poem 'The Bowge<sup>3</sup> of Court,' in 'rime royal,' and his 'Speke Parrot,' in the same metre. His songs and lyrics are sometimes very graceful, and are far better than any of his contemporaries' efforts in that direction.

There is no English poet over whom we need linger between Skelton and Surrey<sup>4</sup>; but before we consider the writings of the latter, let us glance at the works of the northern writers mentioned on p. 4.

The approximate date of Dunbar's birth is inferred

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churton Collins, who adds: 'In this sordid and disgusting delineation of humble life he may fairly challenge the supremacy of Swift and Hogarth.' The 'heroine' of the poem is the keeper of a tavern.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Bourge* (Fr. *bouche*), properly 'food,' 'allowance of victuals,' and so 'profit' or 'rewards.'

<sup>4</sup> Such importance as John Heywood (1506-65?) has in the history of our literature is due to his interludes, an account of one of which is given in the remarks of the drama before 1580, p. 59, where also a description is given of Nicholas Udall's comedy, which is thought by some to have been written before the end of Henry VIII.'s reign. The names of some of Heywood's chief productions are 'A Play of Love,' 'The Four P's,' and 'Johan the Husband, Tyb his Wife, and St. Johan the Prestyr' (all 'interludes,' see p. 35). Udall (1506-56), besides writing 'Ralph Roister Doister,' translated from Terence and Erasmus, and compiled a class-book for his pupils, viz., 'Flowers of Latin Speaking.' He was a man of the New Learning and the new religious tendencies, on account of which latter he seems to have been ejected from the head-mastership of Eton, which he had held between 1534-43. In the year before his death, however, he was made Master of Westminster.



from the fact that he entered the University of St. Andrews in 1475; he travelled as a Franciscan friar in England, Scotland, and the Continent; he is thought to have been employed on business of state by James IV., from whom he received an annuity.

Dunbar's place in our literature is a very honourable one, while among the writers who have used the 'Scotch' dialect (*i.e.*, northernmost English) there is no poet (except, perhaps, Henryson<sup>1</sup>) who has the slightest claim to be ranked as his equal until we come to Burns. To the latter he is indeed far inferior as a lyric poet; but in humour, imagination, and vigour, and in his power of 'picture-drawing,' he seems to us his equal; while in satire the advantage is perhaps on the side of the earlier poet. Gawain Douglas and Lyndesay, owing to the accident that they are more or less Dunbar's contemporaries, and employed the same dialect as he does, are often bracketed with him, much as we find mention of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate; but the student must not let himself be led astray by this fortuitous connection. By the side of Dunbar's poems, Douglas's work is, at best, picturesque verse, and Lyndesay's little more than clever rhymed prose.

The variety of Dunbar's work is very considerable; among his best poems are, 'The Golden Terge,' 'The Thrissill and the Rois,' and 'The Daunce of the Sevin Deidly Synnis.' In the first of these Dunbar displays his powers of picturesque description in a poem in the style of the pseudo-Chaucerian 'Romaunt of the Rose' and 'The Flower and the Leaf.'<sup>2</sup> 'The Thistle and the

<sup>1</sup> Henryson's works are not discussed in this book because he seems to belong to a former age; he appears to have been born about 1425, to have died about the last decade of the fifteenth century; he is lamented among Dunbar's 'Makars' (see p. 18). His chief works, 'Robyne and Makyne,' the first English pastoral, and his 'Testament of Cresseid' (a sequel to Chaucer's 'Troilus and Criseyde'), and his 'Fables,' are of a very high order: his pretty and fanciful ballad, 'The Garmond of Fair Ladies,' is well known.

<sup>2</sup> In 'The Golden Terge,' Dunbar represents himself as going out on the conventional May morning (by no means conventionally described), falling asleep by the water-side and seeing in a dream a magnificent ship; from this disembark many goddesses, including Venus, Aurora, Fortune, May, and Nature, to whom the birds and flowers do homage; while Cupid appears on the scene surrounded by attendant gods. The poet advances to see the heavenly visitors more clearly, but Venus, catching sight of him, bids her friends fall upon him. Beauty and

Rose' is an allegorical poem (following the same models) on the marriage of James IV. with Margaret, daughter of Henry VII. (1503). The poet finds himself rebuked by Aurora for lying in bed after 'the lark has done the mirry day proclame' (of course on a May morning). He is bidden to rise and carry out his intention of 'to dyscryve the ross<sup>1</sup> of most plesance.' He follows Aurora into a beautiful garden, beautifully described, whither Dame Nature bids all the birds and beasts to appear before her. The lion is crowned king of beasts, and enjoined to protect the weak and distribute equal justice; the eagle she 'crownit king of fowlis'; the 'awfull thrissil with his busche of speiris' is given the lordship of plants and flowers, and is especially counselled to cherish the 'fressche ross.' A stanza from the concluding portion of the poem, describing the gleeful song of the birds, will give the reader some slight idea of Dunbar's work:<sup>2</sup>

'The merle scho sang, "haill roiss of most delyt,

Haill of all flouris quene and soverane :"

The lark scho sang, "haill roiss, both reid and quhyt,

Most plesand flour, of mighty colouris twane :"

The nychtingaill sang, "haill naturis suffragane,

In bewty, nurtour, and every nobilness,

In riche array, renown and gentilness."'<sup>3</sup>

The drift of 'The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins'<sup>4</sup> is

Youth, Innocence, Dignity, Honour, and many more attack him together or in turn; but Reason interposes his 'Golden Targe' and keeps him in safety, until Presence (by which, as Warton says, 'the poet understands that irresistible incentive accruing to the passion of love by being often admitted to the company of the beloved object') blinds Reason and wounds the poet, who falls a captive to Beauty. Then he has to suffer at the hands of Dissimulation, New Acquaintance, Danger, and, finally, Grief, whose prisoner he is when a wind blows through the trees, scattering the leaves and shattering the vision. The poem closes with a fine eulogy ('a laboured encomium,' according to Warton) on 'reverend Chaucer, rose of rethoris all,' 'morale Gower,' and 'Lydgate laureate.' The metre of the 'Golden Targe' is a nine-lined stanza, of which there is a single rhyme for lines 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, and another for lines 3, 6, 7, 9: i.e., *a a b a a b b a b*. The date of its composition is uncertain, but it was printed in 1508.

<sup>1</sup> I.e., *Rose*, the allegorical heraldic representative of Margaret; similarly, the *Thistle* is James.

<sup>2</sup> The poem is reprinted in full in Skeat's 'Specimens of English Literature,' 1394-1379 (Clarendon Press).

<sup>3</sup> In the extracts from the English writers it has not been thought useful to show their mere peculiarities of *spelling* (see p. 9): in quoting from the northern dialect, however, of course no attempt is made to convert the language into modern (southern) English. The only words in the stanza above which can possibly puzzle any reader are 'scho' and 'quhyt' = 'she' and 'white' respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Viz.: Pride, ire, envy, covetousness, sloth, lechery, gluttony.

sufficiently described by its title. Professor Nichol calls it Dunbar's 'masterpiece,' and adds that 'it may have been suggested by passages in "Piers Plowman," but the horrid crew of vices, summoned from their dens by lines each vigorous as the crack of a whip, are real, and Scotch, and contemporary, drawn from a knowledge of the world, not from books. These supplied Dunbar with his terminology, that with his thought.' To the rest of Dunbar's works we can give little space, but the 'Lament for the Makars' (*i.e.*, poets), written 'when he was seik,' must not be quite unnoticed; the pathetic poem in which he rehearses the victories of death over knight, champion, lady, clerk, art-magician, and leech, concludes with a more personal note of mourning for his fellow 'makars' and the reflection:

'Sen he has all my brether ta'en,  
He will nocht lat me leif alane,  
On forse I mon his nyxt prey be :  
*Timor mortis conturbat me.*<sup>1</sup>

'Sen for the deid remeid is none,  
Best is that we for deid dispone,  
Eftir our deid that leif may we :  
*Timor mortis conturbat me.*<sup>2</sup>

Douglas was a younger son of Archibald 'Bell-the-Cat,' Earl of Angus. Educated at the University of St. Andrews and in Paris, he entered the Church and became Provost of St. Giles, Edinburgh, Abbot of Aberbrothrock, and Bishop of Dunkeld. 'He appears also,' says Warton, 'to have been nominated by the Queen-regent to the archbishopric either of Glasgow or of St. Andrews; but the appointment was repudiated by the Pope. In 1513, to avoid

<sup>1</sup> This Latin line ends every verse. 'Sen' = 'since'; 'mon' = 'must.'

<sup>2</sup> The date of this poem is uncertain: it was printed in 1508. The chief of Dunbar's other works are, 'The Two Married Women and the Widow,' a satire which Professor Nichol considers 'his most elaborate composition, and that which ranks next in originality to the 'Dance'; 'Tidings fra the Sessions,' a satiric dialogue between two rustics; 'The Justes between the Tailour and the Souter'; 'The Friars of Berwick,' and many short poems. He had a 'flyting' or quarrel in verse with 'Good Maister Walter Kennedy,' who is mentioned among the dead 'makars.' This Kennedy wrote a poem, 'In Praise of Aige,' an 'Invective against Mouththanklessness,' and other works, none of which are considered to be of any literary value.



the persecutions of the Duke of Albany, he fled from Scotland into England and was most graciously received by King Henry VIII., who, in consideration of his literary merit, allowed him a liberal pension.<sup>1</sup> He died of the plague in London, 1521.'

Douglas's chief work, his translation of the 'Æneid,'<sup>2</sup> is notable for several reasons. We shall find before the end of the sixteenth century a large number of versions of the classics (see Chap. V.), but there is no metrical translation of any of them in English before Douglas's 'Æneid.'<sup>3</sup> Moreover, this work of Douglas has stamped its author as the typical poet of the earliest years of the revival of learning in Scotland;<sup>4</sup> and, finally, the version is of considerable poetic merit. 'We must not,' says Mr. Lang, 'ask the impossible from Douglas,—we must not expect exquisite philological accuracy; but he had the "root of the matter," an intense delight in Virgil's music and in Virgil's narrative, a perfect sympathy with "Sweet Dido," and that keen sense of the human life of Greek, Trojan, and Latin, which enabled him in turn to make them live in Scottish rhyme. If he talks of "the nuns of Bacchus," and if his Sibyl admonishes Æneas to "tell his beads," Douglas is merely using what he thinks the legitimate freedom of the translator.' The following is a favourable specimen of Douglas's work as translator; it is a description of night:

<sup>1</sup> 'In England,' Warton adds, 'he contracted a friendship with Polydore Vergil, one of the classical scholars of Henry's court.' This Vergil (an Italian) wrote a Latin history of English affairs, afterwards used by the Elizabethan chroniclers.

<sup>2</sup> He also translated the 'thirteenth' book written by Mapheus Vegius (d. 1458) and Ovid's 'Art of Love.' The latter translation is not now extant: the Virgil was completed in 1513.

<sup>3</sup> Many older writers—e.g., Lydgate—had drawn their stores from classical sources, especially from Ovid and Statius; but their knowledge seems mostly to have been obtained at second-hand (through French and Italian sources), and their work was in no sense (and was not meant to be) translation from the classic originals.

<sup>4</sup> 'The revival of letters,' says Mr. Andrew Lang, 'when it reached Scotland, was crushed out by the nobles, who hated dominies and Italians. . . . The lilacs and laurels of Italy, the sweet Virgilian measures, were soon blighted and silenced, by the wind and hail of Scotland, by clerical austerity, and the storms of war.' This quotation will prevent the student inferring from the sentence above that Douglas has any such position in the history of Scotch poetry as Surrey and Wyatt have in English. Douglas is a 'humanist,' and his chief work is the outcome of his classical learning: the influence, however, of *Palaire* literature on his thought and style is not perhaps stronger than it is on Chaucer, whose respectful disciple he is.

'The nycht followis, and euery wery wicht  
 Throw out the erd has caught anone richt  
 The sound plesand slepe thame likit best ;  
 Woddis and rage and seis war at rest :  
 And the sternis thar myd cours rollis down,  
 All feyldis still, but<sup>1</sup> othir noyis or sown ;  
 And bestis and birdis of diuers culloris seir,<sup>2</sup>  
 And quhatsumevir in the braid lochis weir,  
 Or among buskis harsk<sup>3</sup> leyndis<sup>4</sup> ondir the spray,  
 Throw nichtis silence slepit quhar thai lay,  
 Mesing<sup>5</sup> ther besy thocht and curis smart,  
 All irksom laubour forzet and out of hart.'

The most interesting of Douglas's work, however, is to be found in the prologues which he has prefixed to each book of the 'Æneid'; these show that the writer has a considerable gift for original poetry, which we can see also from his two other chief works, the 'Palice of Honour' and 'King Hart.'<sup>6</sup> Douglas handles his metres with taste and skill, excels in brilliant and often gorgeous description; he has a good eye for landscape and for colour.

Lyndesay, born about the year 1490 and educated at St. Andrew's, entered the service of James IV. and became a sort of tutor or 'governor' to the young prince, afterwards James V. In 1530 he was knighted and made 'Lord Lyon King-at-Arms.' He died in 1557 or the next year.

Lyndesay's work is voluminous, and has little (if any) of the higher qualities of poetry; but, nevertheless, it is extremely interesting, being in nearly every case more or less closely connected with the politico-religious movements of the day. Lyndesay speaks out on the reforming side with no uncertain sound. We find among his writings the usual proportion of imitative allegory, but

<sup>1</sup> Without.    <sup>2</sup> Various.    <sup>3</sup> Harsh, rough.    <sup>4</sup> Lives, inhabits.    <sup>5</sup> Softening.

<sup>6</sup> The student will find the best of Douglas's prologues in Skcat's specimens (see p. 2). 'The Palace of Honour' (about 1500) is an allegorical poem, with the usual May morning and vision in which the poet sees heroes, poets, etc.; it is in the metre of Dunbar's 'Golden Targe,' which in form it resembles: the analysis given of that poem (p. 16) and of Hawes' 'Pastime of Pleasure' will make it unnecessary for us to dwell on the subject-matter of any other of the numerous, more or less meritorious, allegories of the day. 'King Hart' (*i.e.*, Heart), an allegory dealing with the soul of man, is not remarkable: the date of its composition is uncertain; it is written in eight-line stanzas (a b a b c b c).



much of it bears directly on the events of his time. One of his best works—'The Dreame'<sup>1</sup>—begins with an address to his royal pupil (now King), in which there are several autobiographical details. In the poem (in the design of which there is little originality,<sup>2</sup> but more imagination than is usual with Lyndesay) the stanzas which deal with the poet's conversation with 'Jhone the Common-weill' are a vigorous satire on the condition of State and Church in Scotland; the poem closes with some bold and severe advice to the King. Lyndesay is seen here at his best, for his excellence is in didactic satire. 'The Complaynt' (1529) is a personal petition for some reward for his services mingled with a denunciation of the clergy of the day and more advice to the King, who, now being 'to no man subjectit',<sup>3</sup> is exhorted to walk in the paths of justice.<sup>4</sup> The following lines are a fair sample of the 'Complaint' and give a few interesting details of the relation between the King and the poet: 'I call to witness in my favour,' say the latter, 'the Queen thy mother, the lord chancellor, thy nurse, with many another:'

'Auld Willie Dillie, wer he on lyve,  
My lyfe full weill he could discryve:  
Quhow as ane chapman beris his pak,  
I bure thy grace upon my bak,

\* \* \*

As I at lenth into my Dreame  
My sindry servyce did expreme,  
I wate thou luffit me better than  
Nor now sum wife dois her gude man.

<sup>1</sup> Written about 1528.

<sup>2</sup> The poet wanders out (in *January*) and sees the birds complaining to Dame Nature and calling for warm weather. He lies down in a cavern and (being an allegorical poet) falls asleep and has a vision, in which he sees Remembrance, who conducts him through hell and heaven; 'from Paradise,' as Warton puts it, 'a very rapid transition is made to Scotland.' There Sir Commonwealth gives him a satirical account of public affairs, after which Remembrance brings him back to his cave and the poet awakes. He writes out his vision, and adds to it the advice to and censure of James, referred to above, for the 'incredible boldness' of which he deserves praise. 'Most of the addresses to James V. by the Scotch poets,' says Warton, 'are satires instead of panegyrics.'

<sup>3</sup> James IV. was killed at Flodden in 1513, and his infant son became James V. The Queen, his mother—Dunbar's 'Rose'—became regent, till she was displaced by the Duke of Albany. In 1524, after much fierce feud, the twelve-year-old King had 'the governance of all Scotland' nominally put into his hands; but in 1528 he managed to rid himself of his tyrannical protector, Angus, and determined to be no longer 'to such counsellors coactit.'

<sup>4</sup> And to reward David Lyndesay: he was knighted and given the office mentioned above shortly afterwards.

Then men tyll uther did recorde,  
 Said Lyndsay wald be maid ane lord :  
 Thow hes maid lords, schir, be Sanct Geill  
 Of sum that hes nocht servit so weill.<sup>1</sup>

'Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis' is a morality play (see p. 35), which Professor Nichol calls 'the first approach to a regular dramatic composition in Scotland. It is,' he also says, 'a well-sustained invective against the follies and vices of the time . . . [and] abounds in exhibitions of the author's unrestrained Rabelaisian humour.' 'The Monarchie' (about 1552) is a chronicle in verse in the form of a dialogue between a courtier and Experience; it derives its title from the fact that Experience tells the courtier the history of the famous monarchies of the world from the Creation; he attacks the Popes vigorously<sup>2</sup> and ends with a description of the Judgment Day.

With Lyndesay we have passed beyond the limit of the period covered by this chapter. We turn back to Surrey and England again to look at the work of Surrey and Wyatt. 'Tottel's Miscellany,' containing most of the known poems<sup>3</sup> of both these writers, was published in 1557, several years after their death. In the 'Miscellany' there is nothing to enable us to classify

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<sup>1</sup> Lyndesay is at his best as regards pathos in his references to the young King, to whom he seems to have been sincerely (if not quite disinterestedly) attached; in the 'Dream' he had written:

'Quhen thou wes young, I bure the in myne arme  
 Full tenderlye till thow begonh to gang;  
 And in thy bed, oft happit the full warme  
 With lute in hand, syne softly to the sang.'

And he goes on to say how he used to dress himself up to represent characters from stories for him, acting 'interludes' for his benefit.

<sup>2</sup> 'Lyndesay may almost have been said to have been born a Protestant,' says Professor Nichol; 'but he never ventured beyond the range of the leading reformers of his age. . . . His mission was to amuse and arouse the people of his time, to affront them with a reflection of their vices, and to set to rough music the thunder and the whirlwind of sixteenth-century iconoclasm.' Among a large quantity of the productions of Lyndesay not described above should be noticed 'The Complaynt of the Kinge's Papyngo' (i.e., parrot) and 'The Testunent of the Papyngo' (1530), satires on the clergy; 'The Historie of Squier Meldrum,' a humorous metrical romance; 'Kittie's Confession,' etc.

<sup>3</sup> Some account of the other contributors to the 'Miscellany' is given on p. 39. Surrey's translation of the 'Æneid' was not included in the volume, but published separately (by Tottel) a fortnight later. Nor does the 'Miscellany' ('Songs and Sonnets' is its proper title, see p. 39) contain Wyatt's metrical translation of some of the Psalms.

the pieces chronologically, and there is little or no internal evidence from which we can form any judgment as to the influence the one may have exercised on the other. It would be interesting to know which of them it is who has the better right to be considered the first modern English poet, the first English poet in whose work we find no traces of the influence of mediæval English poetry, the English poet whose clear notes prelude the chorus of Elizabethan song. Wyatt was the older man, and we proceed to treat him before Surrey; Surrey excels his friend both in workmanship and poetic gifts, and is usually looked upon as the 'master-spirit.'<sup>1</sup>

Of Wyatt's life little need be said. Of good family and university education—he was entered at St. John's College, Cambridge, 1515—he was early introduced to the English court. He was sent to Spain in 1537 on a mission to the Emperor, having visited Italy, it is said, some ten years earlier in the train of an English ambassador. In 1539 he was sent on a second mission to the Emperor, which took him to France and the Low Countries; on his return he was thrown into prison at Bonner's instigation, but was released again (1541), and was employed in the King's service at the time of his death in the next year.<sup>2</sup> He is, it may

Sir Thomas  
Wyatt,  
1503-42.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churton Collins thinks 'that Wyatt was the master-spirit, and that Surrey has been enabled to throw him so completely and so unfairly into the shade *mainly because he had his friend's patterns to work upon*. Wyatt was his senior by at least fourteen years, and Wyatt's poems, if we except at least the satires and the Penitential Psalms, were in all probability early work.' On the other hand, Professor Skeat says: 'His [Wyatt's] songs are an *inferior imitation* of Surrey's;' and this seems to be the general opinion. If imitations, they certainly are inferior; if, however, Surrey was the imitator, then we must remember Wyatt had no English 'patterns to work upon.'

<sup>2</sup> The following stanzas are from a poem of Surrey's on the death of his friend:

'W[ Wyatt ] resteth here, that quick could never rest :  
Whose heavenly gifts encreased by disdain,  
And virtue sank the deeper in his breast  
Such profit he by envy could obtain.

'A visage, stern and mild ; where both did grow,  
Vice to contemn, in virtue to rejoyce :  
Amid great storms whom grace assured so,  
To live upright and smile at fortune's choice.



be noted, sometimes called 'Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder,' to distinguish him from his son and namesake, 'the Younger,' the leader of 'Wyatt's Rebellion.'

The best of Wyatt's works are undoubtedly his three satires, viz., 'Of the Mean and Sure Estate,' which tells the fable of the town and country mouse (Horace, bk. ii., sat. vi.); 'Of the Courtier's Life' (adapted from a contemporary Italian poet, Alemanni); and 'How to Use the Court and Himself Therein,' written to Sir Francis Bryan.<sup>1</sup> These satires are acute and interesting, full of manliness and free from personal bitterness; their wit, observation, and polish show the writer to have been 'a scholar and a gentleman,' and a man of the world. An idea of his style and metre<sup>2</sup> may be gained from this short extract, where he speaks of his own unfitness for 'the courtier's life':

'I am not he such eloquence to boast,  
To make the crow in singing as the swan;  
Nor call the lion of coward beasts the most,  
That cannot take a mouse, as the cat can;  
And he that dieth for hunger of the gold,  
Call him Alexander; and say that Pan  
Passeth Apollo in music manifold:  
Praise "Sir Topas" for a noble tale,  
And scorn the story that the knight told;  
Praise him for counsel that is drunk of ale:  
Grin when he laughs that beareth all the sway,  
Frown when he frowns, and groan when he is pale:  
On other's lust to hang both night and day.'

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'A hand that taught what might be said in rhyme:  
That reft Chaucer the glory of his wit:  
A mark, the which (unperfected, for time)  
Some may approach, but never none may hit.'

The metre, the student will observe, is that which he is familiar with in Gray's 'Elegy' and Dryden's 'Annus Mirabilis': it is sometimes known as the 'heroic quatrain,' and this is one of the first examples of its use in English. Surrey, we may say, without much risk of error, introduced it.

<sup>1</sup> Bryan was himself a writer of verse, some of which is believed to be among the work of the 'unknown authors' in 'Tottell's Miscellany.' He executed in 1548 a translation of a French treatise (itself from a Spanish original), 'A Dispraise of the Life of a Courtier.'

<sup>2</sup> The metre known as *terza rima* is borrowed from the Italian (it is that of Dante's 'Divina Commedia'), and is used by Surrey in the first of the poems in Tottel (description of the restless state of a lover). The extract given above illustrates its construction; its rhyme-formula is *a b a b c b c d c d e d e*, and so on, using each rhyme three times, except at the beginning and end, where we have a 'heroic quatrain.'

Most of Wyatt's other poems—complaints, songs, sonnets, etc.—deal with love; most of them, too, are borrowed from, or at least modelled on, Italian and French poets.<sup>1</sup>

The date of Howard's birth is not certainly known; it may have been one or two years earlier than is here stated. His father, the Earl of Surrey, became Duke of Norfolk in 1524, and from that date the poet assumed the (courtesy) title of Earl of Surrey. He and his father were accused of treason in 1546, and the poet was executed in the following year. The tradition that Surrey travelled in Italy rests on no evidence.

Henry  
Howard,  
Earl of  
Surrey,  
1518-47.

Surrey's version of 'Certain Books of the Æneis'<sup>2</sup> is the first example of English blank verse. His handling of the metre is stiff and formal, but this is natural in a first experiment in English of such a novel kind; his translation is faithful, but on the whole prosaic; there are, however, some passages which are spirited and poetic, though very few (if any) which can be praised for harmony. In the 'Songs and Sonnets' the poet is seen to greater advantage. We have already seen a specimen of his graver work,<sup>3</sup> but his merit is perhaps more conspicuous in his love poems, of which the following sonnet may serve as a fair example:

'From Tuscan came my lady's worthy race;  
Fair Florence was sometime her ancient seat;  
The western isle, whose pleasant shore doth face  
Wild Camber's cliffs, did give her lively heat;  
Fostered she was with milk of Irish breast:  
Her sire an earl, her dame of princes' blood.  
From tender years in Britain doth she rest,  
With king's child, where she tasteth costly food.

<sup>1</sup> 'The dignity and gravity which characterize the structure of some of his lyric periods appear to have been caught from the poets of *Castile*,' says Mr. Collins.

<sup>2</sup> Viz., books ii. and iv. 'Mr. Craik thinks that Surrey's translation was suggested by the earliest Italian example of blank verse, viz., "a translation of the first and fourth books of the 'Æneid,' by the Cardinal Hippelito di Medici, or, as some say, by Molza, which was published at Venice in 1541." It also seems probable that Surrey was in some degree indebted to the translation made by Gawain Douglas' (Skeat).

<sup>3</sup> See p. 23, note.

Hunsdon did first present her to mine eyne,  
 Bright is her hue, and Geraldine she hight.  
 Hampton me taught to wish her first for mine ;  
 And Windsor, alas ! doth chase me from her sight.  
 Her beauty of kind,<sup>1</sup> her virtues from above :  
 Happy is he that can obtain her love.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Of kind, i.e., from or by nature.*

<sup>2</sup> Almost the only law which regulates the metrical structure of the sonnet in English is that it shall contain fourteen lines : the specimen given above is of the form always used by Shakespeare : it consists of three quatrains, followed by a rhyming couplet. Some of Surrey's sonnets, however, approach more closely to the Italian model, which, in its strictest form, is rarely found in English poetry ; and some of Wyatt's are exact in form, but extremely harsh and unpoetical. The following 'Petrarchian stanza' is quoted from Milton, to exemplify the form of this kind of composition :

'Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
 Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold ;  
 Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,  
 When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,  
 Forget not ; in Thy book record their groans  
 Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
 Slain by the bloody Piedmontese that rolled  
 Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans  
 The vales redoubled to the hills, and they  
 To Heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow  
 O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway  
 The triple tyrant ; that from these may grow  
 A hundred-fold, who having learned Thy way  
 Early may fly the Babylonian woe.'

The *sonnet* is here printed so as to show its metrical structure : the first eight lines (the octave) have two rhymes, arranged thus : *abbaabba* ; the following six (the sestet) have another two : *cdecde*. Milton himself only now and then uses this exact form, between which and the 'Shakespearian' almost every possible variation, as regards the arrangement of the lines and the number of rhymes, is to be found in our poetry.



### CHAPTER III.

#### The Prose Writers ; More, Latimer, Tyndale, etc.

MORE was the son of Sir John More, a judge of the Court of King's Bench ; he was taken in his youth as a page into the household of Cardinal Morton, the then lord chancellor, and subsequently educated at Oxford. Erasmus, whose close friend he became, mentions him as early as 1497 as a young man of especially remarkable gifts.<sup>1</sup> After leaving Oxford More studied law, entered Parliament, held various public appointments, and on the fall of Wolsey became chancellor (1529). A sturdy champion of the Roman Church, and unable to approve the King's action in ecclesiastical matters, he ceased to be chancellor in 1532 ; in 1535 he was executed.

The most famous of More's writings is his 'Utopia.' This, the only literary work which the general reader is apt to associate with his name, was unfortunately written by its author in *Latin*, so that it has little place in an elementary treatise on the history of our literature, which must necessarily deal with form and style rather than with subject-matter. Nevertheless, 'Utopia' is too full of interest in other respects to be passed over with a mere mention, for it is the typical product of the early 'New Learning.' The following is a brief analysis of the work.<sup>2</sup> In the beginning of the first book More narrates

<sup>1</sup> See p. 6. 'Thomæ Mori ingenio quid unquam finxit natura vel mollius, vel dulcius, vel felicius ?' says Erasmus, Ep. xiv., December 3, 1497 (quoted by Hallam).

<sup>2</sup> It was written in 1515 and 1516, and first published at Louvain at the end of the latter year. It was not translated into English till long after the author's death, the earliest version being that by Ralph Robinson, 1561, from which our extracts are taken.<sup>1</sup>

how he was sent as ambassador to Flanders in company with Cuthbert Tunstall. At Antwerp his friend, Peter Giles—better known by his Latin name of *Ægidius*—introduced him to ‘a certain stranger, a man well stricken in age, with a black, sunburnt face, a long beard, and a coat cast homely about his shoulders, whom by his savour and apparel forthwith I judged to be a mariner.’ This man was a Portuguese traveller—‘and one well learned in the Latin tongue, but profound in the Greek’—whose name was Raphael Hythloday.<sup>1</sup> He had joined ‘Amerigo Vespucci, and in the three last of those four voyages *that be now in print and abroad in every man’s hands*, he continued still in his company, save that in the last voyage he came not home again with him,’<sup>2</sup> for he got leave to stay and explore the country with some of his companions. Hythloday, in conversation with More and Giles, touches on ‘divers things that be amiss, some here and some there,’ and expresses himself as a man of profound experience and knowledge. In answer to questions of More as to whether he had ‘ever been in our country,’ Hythloday gave an account of his stay in England, and of a conversation at Cardinal Morton’s<sup>3</sup> dinner-table. In this conversation some of the chief questions of the time are discussed, and it is evident that More’s sympathies are in favour of what we now consider the more ‘civilized’ solutions. Hythloday inveighs against the hanging of thieves, who would not for the most part be thieves if they had but the means of getting an honest living;

<sup>1</sup> Gk. ἄλογος=idle talk, nonsense, and δάιος=knowing, cunning.

<sup>2</sup> The voyages were in 1497, 1498, 1501, 1503: the words in italics above bear witness to the wide-spread interest felt in the discoveries of the New World.

<sup>3</sup> About 1495. The description of his old master which More puts into Hythloday’s mouth is worth quoting: ‘[He was] a man not more honourable for his authority than for his prudence and virtue. In his face did shine such an amiable reverence as was pleasant to behold; gentle in communication, yet earnest and sage. . . . In his speech he was fine, eloquent, and pithy. In the law he had profound knowledge, in wit he was incomparable, and in memory wonderful excellent. These qualities, which in him were by nature singular, he by learning and use had made perfect. The King put much trust in his counsel, the weal public also in a manner leaned unto him. For even in the chief of his youth he was taken from school into the court, and there passed all his time in much trouble and business, being continually tumbled and tossed in the waves of divers misfortunes and adversities. And so by many and great dangers he learned the experience of the world, which so being learned cannot easily be forgotten.’

against the luxury and extortion of landlords; against the turning of 'whole fields, houses, and cities' into sheep-runs, thus depriving husbandmen of their labour; against the practices of 'ingrossing' and 'forestalling,' which cause such dearth and high prices of victuals, and so on. Hythloday, after narrating this conversation to More, goes on to answer Giles's suggestion that he should bestow the benefit of his experience and learning on some king. Hythloday shows him of how little account the most honest and good advice is at court: 'If so be that I should speak those things that Plato feigneth in his weal public, or that the *Utopians* do in theirs, these things they were better, yet they might seem spoken out of place.' Then, at the persuasion of his friends, he gives them a description of the manners and customs of Utopia, which occupies the second book. Utopia was the land which Hythloday found on his last journey mentioned above. In it none of the abuses exist which More finds in the England of his days; justice, religious toleration, education, learning, and the arts flourish; idleness is unknown, and crime rare; money and precious stones are of little account, hunting is looked on as the 'most abject part of butchery,' and war is never engaged in by the Utopians, Utopia meaning, be it remembered, 'Nowhere.'<sup>1</sup> More tells his story with much grave humour and sedate fancy, and with a grace of expression and delicate picturesqueness of style which make it the greater pity that he did not write it in his own language.<sup>2</sup> 'His romance exhibits infinite resources

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<sup>1</sup> οὐ (not) and τόπος (place). More observes that the island was named from a certain king, Utopus.

<sup>2</sup> 'Owing to the Conquest a certain discredit rested for generations on England's original language. Long after an English nation, rich in every sort of glory, had come into being, writers are to be found hesitating to use the national idiom. This circumstance is chiefly noticeable in prose, where the use of a foreign tongue offers less difficulties than in poetry. Prose was less cultivated in England even so late as the commencement of the sixteenth century than in France during the thirteenth. . . . A hundred years later, something of this want of confidence in the future of English prose still lingered. Bacon, after having employed it in his essays and treatises, was seized with anxiety, and kept in his pay secretaries with whose help he meant to translate all his works into Latin, in order to assure himself of their permanence' (Jusserand: 'The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare,' Miss Lee's translation). It may be added that until the seventeenth century there was little translation into Continental tongues from English itself, a language almost unknown abroad; it was therefore absolutely necessary



of spirit and animation,' says M. Jusserand; 'of all his writings, it is the one that best justifies his great reputation for wit and enlightenment. His characters are living men, and their conversation undoubtedly resembles that which delighted him in the society of his friend Erasmus.'

It is not, however, merely as a Latinist that More claims our notice here, for though he has no claim to rank among remarkable stylists in English, yet there is much that is of interest in the manner as well as the matter of his English prose works. Of these latter, one of the earliest is the 'History of the Life and Death of Edward V. . . . and of Richard III.,' probably written shortly before the close of Henry VII.'s reign: it is usually considered the first good bit of historical writing in English,<sup>1</sup> and has been highly praised by Hallam as

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for an author who wished to have his works appreciated by foreign readers to express himself in Latin, the Volapuk of the cultured. No doubt, too, the superstitious reverence with which the classic tongues were regarded had something to do with its employment: but we shall find the sixteenth-century writers using English freely enough in works meant for 'home consumption.' Compare the extracts from Ascham and Mulcaster, on p. 54.

<sup>1</sup> This is, perhaps, a convenient place for a note on the historians, translators, compilers, etc., of the period with whom it is unnecessary to cumber the text of the narrative: the only historical writer in English before More who need be mentioned is

Robert Fabyan (d. 1512), who wrote a 'Concordance of [English] Histories,' a chronicle which extends from the mythic Brut down to the end of the fifteenth century: the bulk of the work (compiled from earlier Latin and French chronicles) is of little value; but on the details of contemporary affairs, and especially in matters connected with the City of London (of which he had been alderman and sheriff), he is said to be trustworthy.

More's 'Edward VI.' (which was written under the influence of, and perhaps partly at the dictation of, Cardinal Morton) was followed by Hall's History of the 'Union of the two Noble and Illustrious Families of Lancaster and York.' Its author, Edward Hall (1500-47), made use of More's work, and incorporated some of it with his own, though to what extent is uncertain. Hall's work has a special interest for the student, as being one of the chief sources of Shakespeare's historical plays.

John Bourchier, Lord Berners (? 1470-1532), began to work at a translation of Froissart's Chronicles about 1520; his style is quaint and fantastic, but clear, vivid and direct, and shows a remarkable advance on the manner of writing of a decade or two earlier. Berners was a good scholar, and translated other works from French, Spanish, etc., besides producing some original compositions.

John Bellenden (Ballantyne) produced a 'History of Scotland' in 1536, a translation from the Latin 'History of Scotland,' by Hector Boyce or Borce (? 1470-1536): this translation is said to be the first specimen of 'Scotch' literary prose. Bellenden also translated parts of Livy and wrote original verse.

George Cavendish (? 1500-1562), who was gentleman-usher to Wolsey, wrote a life of the great cardinal, which we may mention here as belonging for all practical purposes to Henry VIII.'s reign, though internal evidence fixes the actual date of the writing of it (or some of it) at 1554. Cavendish's 'Life' was

'the first example of good English language; pure and perspicuous, well chosen, without vulgarisms and pedantry.' In the Reformation struggle, More championed the anti-Lutheran cause by his writings as well as by the part he took in politics. His 'Dialogue concerning Heresies' (about 1529), his 'Confutation of Tyndale's Answer,' are good specimens of the mass of argumentative polemic matter the produced.

Tyndale, who had received an Oxford education, early sympathized with the Lutheran opinions, by reason of which he seems to have been obliged to quit England in 1523, when he took up his quarters at Hamburg. He had begun his translation of the New Testament in England, and now got parts of it clandestinely printed (1524-25), but difficulties in connection with it drove him from place to place: however, in 1525-26 he had an edition printed at Antwerp, and endeavoured to get copies of it into England. He then turned to the Old Testament, publishing the English of the Pentateuch (printed at Marburg) in 1530, and subsequently revising the earlier editions of his New Testament. His pious labours and perilous wanderings were ended by the martyr's death.

Tyndale's greatest work is the translation of the New Testament, etc., spoken of above: it is impossible to give it higher praise than to say that it is scarcely surpassed in grandeur, melody, and feeling by the Authorised Version itself, and, indeed, that stately storehouse of rhythmic prose owes very much to Tyndale. Tyndale, in turn, is largely (but not nearly so largely) indebted to Luther's version. Tyndale's work as writer on religion and as controversialist has already been touched on. Among the best of his writings of this class are 'The Obedience of a Christian Man,' 'The Practice of Prelates,' and 'An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue': in these and many similar works he appears as a straight-

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later incorporated by Holinshed (see p. 38), and is the basis of a large part of Shakespeare's 'Henry VIII.'

John Leland (? 1506-1552) compiled in the latter part of Henry VIII.'s reign an 'Itinerary,' or account of journeys into every part of England: it is a work of vast diligence, containing a very large amount of information interesting to the antiquarian and the historian.

forward writer, able to express himself with great clearness and directness; they are interesting in every way, but they have none of the high literary qualities of his great translation.

Latimer was the son of a Leicestershire yeoman. He was sent to Cambridge, and distinguished himself by his fervent opposition to the new religious views; but he was soon won over to them, and then became as ardent in their advocacy. In 1530 he preached before Henry VIII., and became one of the King's chaplains, and in 1535 received the bishopric of Worcester, which he resigned in 1539 on the passing of the Six Articles. He was 'commanded to silence' for the remainder of Henry VIII.'s reign, and was (or at least thought himself) in danger of execution. By Edward VI. he was taken into high favour, and to his reign many of his best sermons belong. He was burnt under Mary in 1555: his last words are said to have been an exhortation to his fellow-martyr Ridley: 'Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man: we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.'

Latimer's sermons are remarkable for the vigour and boldness with which he speaks out against the abuses of his day, and, preaching before King and court, he does not hesitate to inveigh against their shortcomings, and to bid them mend their ways. He has a genius for delivering telling illustrations, a great command over language, and a most vivacious and spirited humour; we feel when we read him that he must have been a great orator, and his sentences have about them the declamatory ring that leaves upon the reader an impression of cadence and something like rhythm which he gets from little other prose of the day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> With Latimer we pass beyond the limits of this chapter. Ascham's 'Toxophilus,' the student will do well to bear in mind, belongs to Henry's VIII.'s reign, having appeared in 1545; see p. 53. Of Sir Thomas Elyot (? 1495-1546), a few words may be said here. Elyot was a physician of good birth, scholarly education, and apparently successful practice. His chief work is 'The Governor' (1531), a work on the subject of mental and bodily education: this is written in good English, and is sensible in its views. Among Elyot's other works are 'The Castle of Health,' which treats of digestion, etc., and 'A Preservative against Death,' which discusses morals. Elyot is notable, moreover, as the compiler of the first Latin-English Dictionary.



## CHAPTER IV.

### From 1547 to 1580.

THE various influences which we have seen at work upon thought and form in Henry VIII.'s reign are to be observed to an even greater extent in the period we are about to study: it is still, for the most part, a time of training, a time of preparation rather than one of great performance; but the careful preparatory exercises are approaching more nearly the standard of fine composition, and the years of diligent training are making it possible for the next generation to enter upon an inheritance of literary culture which their fathers and grandfathers had toiled assiduously and painfully to amass.

Of the poetical productions of this time there are two, and only two, which reach a high standard of literary merit: the first is Sackville's 'Induction,' written in the early years of Elizabeth's reign; the other, which appears at the close of the period, giving earnest of more magnificent performance soon to come, is Spenser's 'Shepherd's Calendar.' Between Sackville and Spenser the most notable name is that of Gascoigne, a man whose works are not without merit, and who occupies a curiously interesting place in literary history as one of the introducers and pioneers of new forms. With Gascoigne—satirist, poet, translator, adapter, etc.—we may conveniently consider the works of many of the minor poets and translators from the classics and Italians, whose abundant activity bears testimony to the strength of the Renaissance in England: on the other hand, while looking at Sackville, we will glance at the work of the other contributors and continuators of the 'Mirror

for Magistrates,' not very remarkable in itself, but interesting, as showing the older and newer styles in literature side by side, as well as for other reasons. Before Sackville and between him and Surrey, we need spend no time on any writer of verse, save for another glance at 'Tottel's Miscellany,' the chief contents of which we have already studied. The chronological order, then, in which we have to survey the poets between 1547 and 1580 is even more suggestive than the chronological order usually is: we begin with 'Tottel's Miscellany,' and pass on to Sackville, from him to Gascoigne, and then to Spenser's earlier work, with which our survey closes.

Sackville and Gascoigne have claims on our attention not only as poets, but also as dramatists. The former  
 Drama. gave us the first regular tragedy in our language, while to the latter we are indebted for what is probably our first prose comedy; these are both on foreign models. Sackville's is formed upon Seneca, Gascoigne's is a translation from Ariosto, but, as we shall see, are by no means the less important for that. The distinction of having written the first regular English play belongs to Nicholas Udall, whose rhymed comedy, 'Ralph Roister Doister,' is discussed further on (Chap. VII., p. 60). In that chapter we have also given examples of some of the rudimentary dramatic productions of the earlier Tudor times, so that the student may be able to trace to some extent the growth of the drama from the end of the fifteenth century to the years immediately preceding those when Peele and Greene and Marlowe were preparing the way for Shakespeare. A very few general remarks on what may be called the 'rudimentary drama' may, perhaps, not be out of place here.

The earliest kinds of dramatic representation in England were what are known as 'mystery plays' and 'miracle plays.' The latter dealt with legends and histories of the saints; the former represented scenes and actions from the Bible. Both of them seem to have originated with the clergy,<sup>1</sup> and to have been originally

<sup>1</sup> They are not of English origin, and the earlier ones were written and performed in monkish Latin.

acted within the walls of the monastery; they became so popular, however, that they soon passed into the hands of the laity, but the writing of them remained for the most part, if not entirely, in the hands of clerics; they got to be acted by the guilds of certain towns, and they survived in England down to past the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

It is unnecessary, in studying the history of the drama in the sixteenth century, to pay much attention to the miracles and mysteries, which, as we shall see, are not the progenitors of the Elizabethan drama, and are themselves, as a rule, of little literary value; but this much of importance attaches to them—they popularized the desire for dramatic representation, and (especially by the intermingling of the comic element with the tragic) prepared the way for the reception of the first English popular plays on subjects not connected with the Church. But even more important in this respect are the morality plays, which first appear in the fifteenth century.

These moralities are at first merely acted allegories; personifications of various vices and virtues appear much as they do in the allegorical poems of the time (see Chap. II.); there is no development, or indeed trace, of individuality in the characters, and the dialogue does not make the slightest approach to anything like natural conversation; the sole object of the morality was at first to teach a moral lesson, and the student who bears this in mind will see at once about the only vital connection between them and the miracle plays. Later on, during the Reformation struggles, they were used for theological and political ends, still keeping the idea of teaching a moral lesson. They survived late into the sixteenth century.

We now reach the interlude, which has a resemblance in some respects to the morality, but differs from it in dealing with secular and comic subjects and in developing a dialogue which entitles it to be called, at least in that respect, a rudimentary comedy. The specimen analyzed on p. 59 will give some idea of its form and character.

<sup>1</sup> On the Continent they remained much later: at Ober-Ammergau (Bavaria) a mystery play on the Passion is still acted, but this is not a genuine survival.



Interludes such as these were acted by the servants and retainers of the household, and are important as developing the custom of a nobleman of wealth having a band of more or less well-trained actors dependent on him. In the latter part of Elizabeth's reign, after the drama proper was full-grown, we shall find specific theatrical companies calling themselves the 'Earl of Leicester's servants,' 'the Queen's players,' and so on.

A few words about the masque will conclude this account of the elements of the popular drama. The masque seems to have been in its origin merely a spectacle or bit of a pageant, with a certain amount of pantomime added thereto; dancing and concerted movements brought it into something like the modern ballet, and then the addition of songs and dialogue gave it sometimes a dramatic-operatic character.<sup>1</sup>

We are now in a position to consider to some extent the rise of the English drama, for none of its predecessors hitherto considered have a higher rank than that of our drama's forerunners. We will classify the early Elizabethan drama under three headings—viz., ( $\alpha$ ) the popular drama, ( $\beta$ ) the Latin, and ( $\gamma$ ) the Italian. In many (ultimately in most) of the works of the later Elizabethans we shall find all these elements blended, as we shall to a less extent in some of the earlier ones; here, however, we may consider them separately:

( $\alpha$ ) The popular<sup>2</sup> drama includes the varieties already enumerated, viz., the mystery and the miracle, acted down to the very close of our period; the morality and the interlude; and the rough farce and the chronicle play, developed by and partaking of the nature of both. The later Elizabethan drama owes much to it, notably much of the form of the history-play and much of the clownage and humorous foolery of the comedy.

<sup>1</sup> These remarks apply only to the drama as far as the date (1580) with which this chapter deals. A few years later we shall find Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' a beautiful example of the lyric drama, having many points of resemblance with poetical masque, while later on in 'Henry VIII.' and 'The Tempest' masques of different kinds are introduced. The poetical masques in the first part of the seventeenth century, such as those of Ben Jonson and Milton, do not concern us here.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps a more appropriate name for it would be 'The Mediæval English Show.'

(3) The Latin drama, during the period we deal with here, may conveniently be studied in connection with Udall (see p. 60), and with Sackville (p. 61). In tragedy the model is Seneca; in comedy, Plautus and Terence: it was not the first time the English drama was to draw more or less directly on Seneca as the representative to them of the classic tragedy, for in the earlier plays described above as of foreign origin, he had been the model.<sup>1</sup> Plautus and Terence had also been used before to supply suggestions for the farcical or pseudo-humorous elements of the older plays: in Udall's play, however, we find a comedy, thoroughly English in plot, incident, tone, and dialogue, but based on classic comic models as regards its construction.

(7) The Italian drama, as far as it concerns us here, finds its representative as regards tragedy in such works as Gascoigne's 'Jocasta,' or Whetstone's 'Promos and Cassandra,' and as regards comedy, in Gascoigne's 'Supposes.' We need not here dwell long on this section: but let us point out that it is perhaps the most important factor of the great Elizabethan stage, and that it itself was derived from the Latin drama.

To conclude this sketch of the early drama: the student will bear in mind the facts ( $\alpha$ ) that no masterpiece of what is known as the 'Elizabethan drama' appeared till some years after the close of the period with which this

<sup>1</sup> The following remarks on the plays of Seneca the tragedian (who is generally identified with Seneca the philosopher, A.D. 3-65) may be useful to the student:

"There are eight complete tragedies and one *prætexta*, the "Octavia," which is generally supposed to be by a later hand, as well as considerable fragments from the "Thebais" and "Phœnisæ." The subjects are all from the well-worn repository of Greek legend, and are mostly drawn from Euripides. The titles of "Medea," "Hercules Furens," "Hippolytus," and "Troades," at once proclaim their origin; but the "Hercules Oſteus," "Œdipus Thyestes," and "Agamemnon," are probably based on a comparison of the treatment by the several Attic masters. The tragedies of Seneca have, as a rule, been strongly censured for their rhetorical colouring, their false passion, and their total want of dramatic interest. They are to the Greek plays as gaslight to sunlight. But [we have to remember that]. . . to them [the Romans] the *form* was what constituted a work poetical, not the creative idea that underlay it. To utilize fictitious situations as a vehicle for individual conviction or lofty declamation on ethical common-place, was considered quite legitimate even in the Augustan age. . . . The present low estimate of Seneca is due to the reaction (a most healthy one, it is true) that has replaced the extravagant admiration in which his poems were for more than two centuries held" (Cruttwell: 'Hist. Rom. Lit.' All Seneca's plays were translated into English between 1560 and 1580; see p. 41).

chapter deals, and ( $\beta$ ) that before any such masterpiece appeared the three streams of popular, classical, and Italian playwriting had melted into one, and that though in some fine plays we can trace the influence of any one as being much more powerful than either of the two others, yet there is no Elizabethan play of the highest merit as a work of art to the making of which all three did not to some extent contribute. It is, perhaps, conceivable that had there been a Shakespeare born, say, in the middle of the fifteenth century his genius might have found a way to express itself fitly in the form that it found made, or that it could have made itself out of such material as lay at its disposal; but as a matter of fact we know that we have to take into account that Shakespeare arose and gradually developed after Marlowe and Greene and Peele, and that we have no Marlowe and Greene and Peele till after the years of training and experiment which we have been considering: this, and this alone, would be enough to justify the student in devoting much time and thought to those years of training and experiment.<sup>1</sup>

The prose of the period which calls for much notice is small in extent. Its chief examples are Ascham's

Prose. 'Schoolmaster' (along with which is given some account of his earlier work 'Toxophilus'), and Lyly's 'Euphues.' Certain translators and chroniclers have a particular interest for us, as having provided material for the dramatists to use.

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<sup>1</sup> Of the actual theatre or place in which plays were acted it is not necessary to say much: it has been said that the earliest plays seem to have been acted within the walls of the convent, whence they emerged into the convent's grounds, and thence on to the public streets and places. The early Tudor shows and plays appear in private halls and grounds, in school-buildings and in inn-yards. The 'Children of Paul's' seem to have had a special room or hall for their plays in 1574; while in 1576 the two first theatres, 'The Theatre' and 'The Curtain,' were built.



## CHAPTER V.

### Poetry : from 'Tottel's Miscellany' to the 'Shepherd's Calendar.'

'TOTTEL'S MISCELLANY,' which appeared in 1557, contained the poems of Surrey and Wyatt spoken of in Chap. II. : its original title<sup>1</sup> was 'Songs and  
'Tottel's  
Miscellany.' Sonnets, written by the Right Honourable Lord Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and others,' and among the 'others' (besides Wyatt) were Bryan (see p. 24), John Heywood (see p. 15), Grimald, Lord Vaux, and Churchyard. To each of these last three a few words may be given. Nicholas Grimald (? 1520-1561) is believed to have edited the 'Miscellany.' he contributed to it a large number of poems, most of which are very like mere doggerel; two, however, are of more merit, and are at any rate of considerable interest as the first original English poems in blank verse (Surrey only used the metre in his translation—see p. 25): a few lines from 'The Death of Zoroas,' which is one of these (the other being 'The Death of Cicero'), are here given :

'But happily the soul fled to the stars,  
Where, under him, he hath full sight of all  
Whereat he gazed here with reaching look.  
The Persians wailed such sapience to forego;  
The very foes, the Macedonians, wished  
He would have lived—King Alexander self  
Deemed him a man unmeet to die at all;  
Who won like praise for conquest of his ire,  
As for stout men in field that day subdued;  
Who princes taught how to discern a man  
That in his head so rare a jewel bears.'

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<sup>1</sup> Tottel (or Tottell) was merely the publisher. The poems belong to the latter end of Henry VIII.'s reign, and the reigns of Edward VI. and Mary.

Grimald's poetry was not of a high order, but he had evidently got considerable mastery over unrhymed decasyllabics : among his other works are prose translations, *e.g.*, 'Cicero's de Officiis.'

Thomas, Lord Vaux (1510-1557) contributed to the 'Miscellany' a poem of fifty-six lines, part of which, from the mouth of the grave-digger in 'Hamlet,' has become very famous : here are the three stanzas which are sung (in slightly different form) by the gravedigger :

' I loathe that I did love,  
 In youth that I thought sweet,  
 As time requires for my behove  
 Methinks they are not meet.  
 \* \* \*

' For Age with stealing steps  
 Hath clawed me with his crutch,  
 And lusty Life away she leaps  
 As there had been none such.  
 \* \* \*

' A pickaxe and a spade,  
 And eke a shrouding sheet,  
 A house of clay for to be made  
 For such a guest most meet.'

Some of Vaux's verse also appears in 'The Paradise of Dainty Devices' mentioned below. Thomas Churchyard (? 1520-1604) was another of the contributors to 'Tottel's Miscellany.' A somewhat voluminous

Thomas  
 Churchyard,  
 ? 1520-1604.

writer of both prose and verse, none of which is of much value, his best work is, perhaps, the 'tragedy' of 'Wolsey' in the 'Mirror for Magistrates,' described below.<sup>1</sup> A few lines from another poem of his are given here, as affording a fair idea of a kind of verse very popular with the readers of Tottel and of Tudor literature generally, and as being interesting for the allusions they contain :

' Piers Plowman was full plain, and Chaucer's sp'rit was great,  
 Earl Surrey had a goodly vein, Lord Vaux the mark did beat ;  
 And Phaer did hit the prick, in things he did translate ;  
 And Edwards had a special gift ; and divers men of late  
 Have helped our English tongue, that first was base and brute.  
 Oh, shall I leave out Skelton's name, the blossom of my fruit ?'

The metre, as the student sees, consists of rhyming couplets, of which the first line has twelve syllables and the second fourteen: the twelve-syllable or six-foot line (Alexandrine), has a pause (or *cæsura*) in the middle, which practically breaks it into two lines of three feet each, while the 'fourteener' has the pause after the fourth foot, breaking the line into two of eight syllables and six respectively. The metre was often printed in 'short lines,' as, for example, in Lord Vaux's verses quoted opposite, where the first (short) line rhymes with the third.

Besides Tottel's (which is not actually 'Elizabethan') two other 'Miscellanies' claim our notice. The first of these is 'The Paradise of Dainty Devices,'  
Early Elizabethan Miscellanies. which is described on the title-page of the first edition (1576), as 'devised and written for the most part by Mr. Edwards'—he who 'had a special gift,' according to Churchyard—aided by 'sundry learned gentlemen, both of honour and worship.' It contains poems of Lord Vaux, Edwards,<sup>1</sup> Jasper Heywood,<sup>2</sup> the Earl of Oxford, William Hunnis, Francis Kinwelmersh,<sup>3</sup> and many even less-known writers. The second of the two 'Miscellanies' mentioned above is 'A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions,' compiled by one Proctor and contributed to by Anthony Munday and others: it is said to contain little or nothing of merit. We turn back from it to look at the work of a poet.

Sackville was the only son of Sir Richard Sackville, of Buckhurst (Sussex). After being educated at both universities (like many others in those days),  
Thomas Sackville, 1536 1608. where he began to write verse, he entered Parliament. The work which gives him his place among English poets—the 'Induction' to 'The Com-

<sup>1</sup> Edwards became master of the Queen's Chapel in 1561, and a little later produced his rhymed play of 'Damon and Pythias,' a mixture of comedy and tragedy, containing some pretty verses.

<sup>2</sup> Jasper Heywood (1535-98) was a son of John Heywood (p. 15). He translated Seneca's 'Troas,' 'Thyestes,' and 'Hercules Furens,' into English verse (1560-61), a work in which he was followed by Alexander Neville, John Studley, Thomas Nuce, and Thomas Newton, the last of whom completed the translations of all Seneca's plays in 1580-81.

<sup>3</sup> Gascoigne's co-worker in 'Jocasta,' see p. 62.



plaint of the Duke of Buckingham,' and 'The Complaint' itself—appeared in the second edition of the 'Mirror of Magistrates,' in 1563; his tragedy of 'Gorboduc,' written in conjunction with Thomas Norton (an account of which is given on page 61), belongs to the early part of the previous year. The rest of Sackville's life was spent away from poetry: he drifted into politics. In 1567 he was made Lord Buckhurst, and became lord treasurer on the death of Burleigh (1598), after holding various public offices: King James shortly after his accession made him Earl of Dorset.

Of the general plan and execution of the 'Mirror for Magistrates' we shall speak presently: here we have but to consider Sackville's part in it, 'The Complaint of Buckingham,' and the 'Induction' (or 'Introduction') thereto. In this 'Induction' Sackville figures himself as musing on a desolate winter's day in a desolate wintry scene on

'Such fall of peers as in this realm had been,  
That oft I wished some would their woes describe,  
To warn the rest whom fortune left alive.'

Straightway he beholds the dreary figure of Sorrow herself, who tells her 'fearful tale,' and guides him to the 'grisly lake, and thence unto the blissful place of rest,' where he is to see the mighty dead, and hear them bewail their fate. In stanzas which are alike remarkable for their gloomy power and majestic poetry the poet describes his descent 'within the porch and jaws of hell.' The following two stanzas (perhaps the best, but not much above the level of the whole) may give the student some idea of Sackville's genius: they describe one of the many figures he saw on his way to 'the horror and the hell, the large great kingdoms, and the dreadful reign of Pluto':

'By him<sup>1</sup> lay heavy Sleep, the cousin of Death,  
Flat on the ground, and still as any stone,  
A very corpse, save yielding forth a breath.

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<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, Care.

Small keep took he whom Fortune frowned on,  
 Or whom she lifted up into the throne  
 Of high renown ; but as a living death,  
 So dead alive, of life he drew the breath.

' The body's rest, the quiet of the heart,  
 The travail's ease, the still night's fere<sup>1</sup> was he.  
 And of our life on earth the better part,  
 Reaver of sight, and yet in whom we see  
 Things oft that tide, and oft that never be.  
 Without respect, esteeming equally  
 King Cræsus' pomp and Irus' poverty.'

The student who is inclined to impute the main part of the poverty of earlier Tudor poetry to its over-allegorical characteristics will check his hasty judgment when he calls to mind the fact that Sackville's machinery is that also of Hawes. The former, it is true, is far superior to the latter as a mere metrist, but it seems almost certain that this would have been the case even if Sackville had had no Surrey and Wyatt to precede him ; for it is hard to see anything that he could have learned as regards the technical mastery of verse from them (or even from their models) which he could not have learned from Chaucer. But the main difference between Sackville and his predecessors in England, until we get to Chaucer, lies in his genius ; for every writer in verse, from 'The Pastime of Pleasure' down to the 'Shepherd's Calendar,' except Sackville, we have to aid our admiration or check our distaste by reminding ourselves of the conditions of literary workmanship at the time, of the then standards of taste and culture and so forth ; but with Sackville's 'Induction' this is not so. If we knew nothing of its date or authorship, if we believed it to have been written before Chaucer or after Milton, we should still be forced to admire it as much as ever ; we admire it without any 'considering the standards of his age,' etc. ; we admire it mainly for those qualities it has which lift us above and beyond any such considerations ; but to admit this is

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<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, companion. An eminent critic who finds in Sackville 'stiffness and awkwardness of phrase, and the still imperfect sense of poetical fitness and grace,' scarcely improves this line ('The English Poets,' vol. i.) by writing, apparently in good faith, 'the still night's *fare* was he' !

surely to admit that the 'Induction' has, at least, one of the marks of the supreme in art.

We have little more to say of Sackville's work here; at the end of the 'Induction,' when Sorrow has guided him to the abode of 'Princes of renown, that whilom sat on top of Fortune's wheel,' the poet meets Henry, Duke of Buckingham—'the petty rebel, dull-brain'd Buckingham,' of Shakespeare's 'Richard III.'—who proceeds to tell his doleful 'Complaint,' the story of his death. This and the 'Induction' are Sackville's part in the 'Mirror.' The former is an excellent poem, but not on the whole of nearly such high merit as the other.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now give some account of the work of which Sackville's 'Induction' forms a part. 'The Mirror for

Magistrates,' planned by Sackville, was to consist of a number of poems, each relating the fall, or 'tragedy,' as it was called, of some great personage in English history.<sup>2</sup> Such a design accorded well with the gloomy nature of Sackville's genius, which inclined him to contemplate with sympathy, if not with pleasure, the workings of vicissitude.

<sup>1</sup> The estimate of Sackville's genius given above may seem to some so exaggerated or so inadequate that it may be well to give here the dictum of Hallam, who cannot be accused of a want of sobriety in his critical judgments:

'The "Induction" displays best his poetical genius; it is, like much earlier poetry, a representation of allegorical personages, but with a fertility of imagination, vividness of description, and strength of language, which not only leave his predecessors far behind, but may fairly be compared with some of the most poetical passages in Spenser. Sackville's "Induction" forms a link which unites the school of Chaucer and Lydgate to the "Fairly Queen." It would certainly be vain to look in Chaucer, wherever Chaucer is original, for the grand creations of Sackville's fancy, yet we should never find anyone who would rate Sackville above Chaucer. The strength of an eagle is not to be measured only by the height of his place, but by the time that he continues on the wing. Sackville's "Induction" consists of a few hundred lines; and even in these there is a monotony of gloom and sorrow which prevents us from wishing it to be longer. It is truly styled by Campbell a landscape on which the sun never shines. Chaucer is various, flexible, and observant of all things in outward nature, or in the heart of man. But Sackville is far above the frigid elegance of Surrey; and in the first days of Elizabeth's reign is the herald of that splendour in which it was to close.'

<sup>2</sup> The work was an imitation, or rather a continuation, of Lydgate's 'Falls of Princes,' itself an adaptation (from a French version) of Boccaccio's '*De Casibus Illustrium Virorum*.' Lydgate seems to have been stirred up to write his version by the example of his 'master Chaucer,' who 'made full piteous tragedies' in one of the Canterbury tales described in the MS. as 'The Monk's Tale, *de Casibus Virorum Illustrium*.' The first edition of the 'Mirror' had been begun, but prohibited, before Elizabeth's accession, and did not appear till 1559; the second edition, largely augmented, in 1563; after this there were frequent editions, additions, supplements and imitations, and at least one prose version during Elizabeth's reign.



It is to be regretted that but the small portions of the work already discussed are his, the rest being executed by more mechanical story-tellers in verse, whose names may be just mentioned. Among these are William Baldwin, who endeavoured to carry out Sackville's design, and wrote more than a dozen of the stories, George Ferrers,<sup>1</sup> Thomas Phaer,<sup>2</sup> John Dolman, and Churchyard.<sup>3</sup>

We pass from the Baldwins and Ferrers to a more interesting writer—Gascoigne. He, it is true, does not approach to anything like genius, but the experimental boldness and the variety of his works make him in a way the best representative man of letters of the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign: a writer and translator of prose and of plays,<sup>4</sup> and of many forms of verse, he excels, perhaps, in nothing, but he shows ability in almost everything he tried.

Gascoigne's chief work is 'The Steel Glass' (1576), a satire in blank verse, of which the following may serve as a specimen, while it explains the meaning of the title—

'Lucilius, this worthy man was named,  
Who at his death bequeathed the Crystal Glass  
To such as love to seem, but not to be;  
And unto those that love to see themselves,

<sup>1</sup> Who seems to have been co-editor with Baldwin.

<sup>2</sup> Phaer also translated the greater part of the 'Æneid' into rhyming 'fourteeners.' His work, which was left unfinished at his death in 1560, was completed by Thomas Twyne a few years later.

<sup>3</sup> For some account of Churchyard see p. 40. A poem, ascribed to Skelton (p. 13), on the death of Edward IV., is also included in the series. A 'First Part of the Mirror for Magistrates,' written by John Higgins, was published in 1574; its name is explained by the fact that it dealt with 'magistrates' prior to those of Baldwin's 'Mirror': Higgins is a very poor creature, and was foolish enough to open with an 'Induction' which reads like a feeble burlesque of Sackville.

<sup>4</sup> 'He is the author of our earliest extant comedy in prose—possibly the earliest written—"The Supposes," a translation of Ariosto's "Suppositi," and in part the author of one of our earliest tragedies, "Jocasta"—a paraphrase, rather than a translation, of the "Phoinissai" of Euripides: he is one of our earliest writers of formal satire and of blank verse, and in his "Certain Notes of Instruction concerning the making of Verse or Rime in English" one of the earliest essayists, if not the earliest, on English metres' (Professor Hales: 'English Poets').

For some account of Gascoigne's dramatic work, see p. 63. We may add to the list of 'firsts' with which Gascoigne is credited the earliest known version of an Italian novel in English—"The Story of Ferdinando Jeronimo," from Biondello (see p. 58).

How foul or fair soever that they are,  
 He gan bequeath a Glass of trusty Steel,  
 Wherein they may be bold alway to look,  
 Because it shows all things in their degree.  
 And since myself, now pride of youth is past,  
 Do love to be, and let all seeming pass,  
 Since I desire to see myself indeed,  
 Not what I would, but what I am or should,  
 Therefore I like this trusty Glass of Steel'—

and so on for over eleven hundred lines. It must be admitted that Gascoigne's blank verse is painfully mechanical stuff; but of course we must remember that he is handling a metre almost unknown in England; nevertheless, he does not use it nearly so successfully as Grimald or Surrey.<sup>1</sup> It is in rhyming metres and in shorter poems that Gascoigne's talents are seen to better advantage: in several of his poems (notably in the 'Arraignment of a Lover,') he shows a delicate fancy and a command over a pretty metre which entitle him to be called a poet, though but a minor one. The reader will like these three stanzas from a set of verses in Gascoigne's daintiest manner. 'The Lullaby' is the name of the song, and *lusisti satis* its theme:

'Sing lullabies, as women do,  
 With which they charm their babes to rest;  
 And lullaby can I sing too,  
 As womanly as can the best.  
 With lullaby they still the child,  
 And if I be not much beguiled,  
 Full many wanton babes have I  
 Which must be stilled with lullaby.

'First lullaby my youthful years,  
 It is now time to go to bed;  
 For crooked age and hoary hairs  
 Have won the haven within mine head.  
 With lullaby then youth be still,  
 With lullaby content thy will;  
 Since courage quails and comes behind,  
 Go sleep, and so beguile thy mind.

\* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Observe the way in which Gascoigne's lines all end with a pause in the sense; such lines are technically called 'stopped,' and produce an overpowering sense of weariness after a time. The blank verse line, as Gascoigne writes it, is for the most part made up of five iambs, which makes his verse even more monotonous than it would otherwise be.

'Thus lullaby my youth, mine eyes,  
 My will, my ware, and all that was ;  
 I can no more delays devise,  
 But welcome pain, let pleasure pass.  
 With lullaby now take your leave,  
 With lullaby your pains deceive ;  
 And when you rise with waking eye,  
 Remember then this lullaby.'

Gascoigne was adventurer and scholar,<sup>1</sup> and tried his hand at translations and adaptations of various kinds and from various tongues ; so, too, did George Turberville and Barnaby Googe.

Turberville, like Gascoigne, experimented in various kinds of compositions—translations in prose, rhyme, and blank verse, original compositions, etc. His *George Turberville, 1530-? 1600.* 'Heroical Epistles of Ovid' and his 'Eclogues of Mantuan'<sup>2</sup> are said to have some merit. As one of the early translators of the Italian novels,<sup>3</sup> which the dramatists a little later so freely used, he deserves some mention.

Googe was also a maker of various translations from Latin, Italian, and Spanish. Some of his shorter original pieces are not without merit ; but more notable are his 'Eclogues' (1563), a set of pastoral poems of the kind which we have now to consider in connection with the 'Shepherd's Calendar,' and which may have had some influence on the author of it.

The date of Edmund Spenser's birth is uncertain, but is commonly taken to be 1552. Educated at Merchant Taylors' School in London (his native city), and at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge,<sup>4</sup> his first work of note, 'The Shepherd's Calendar,' appeared in the year 1579, soon after his return to London from a sojourn in the north. It was dedicated to Sir

<sup>1</sup> 'Tam Marti quam Mercurio' is his motto. 'The Steel Glass' was dedicated to his patron, Lord Grey de Wilton, who was also Spenser's friend (see p. 48).

<sup>2</sup> The translations from Ovid and Mantuan appeared in 1567. Part of Ovid's 'Metamorphoses,' translated into the English verse, had been published two or three years earlier ; this was the work of Arthur Golding (d. 1590), who subsequently completed the translation of the whole of the 'Metamorphoses.' Baptista Mantuanus (1448-1516) was a writer of Latin eclogues, on the Virgilian model, whose works were very popular in the sixteenth century.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> Now Pembroke College.



Philip Sidney, with whom he had formed a friendship, probably through the introduction of their joint friend, Gabriel Harvey,<sup>1</sup> and through whom he became acquainted with Sidney's uncle, the powerful Earl of Leicester. In 1580<sup>2</sup> Spenser was appointed secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, who took him in that year to Ireland, where for the present we leave him.

'Now, as touching the general drift and purpose of his *Æglogues*,<sup>3</sup> I mind not to say much, himself labouring to conceal it,' says Master 'E. K.' 'Only this appeareth, that his unstayed youth had long wandered in the common labyrinth of love, in which time to mitigate and allay the heat of his passion, or else to warn (as he saith) the young shepherds,

'The  
Shepherd's  
Calendar.'

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey was a lecturer at Pembroke and Trinity Hall. He made various attempts at literature both in Latin and English, which are of very little value. His friendship with Spenser, however, and the correspondence between them that has been preserved, make him a person of considerable interest in connection with the poet. He was a good scholar and a diligent if pedantic student; he was one of the most active of the knot of 'reformers' of English verse who appear about this period. The reformers wished to graft upon English verse classic metres and (what was far more ridiculous) classic methods which regarded quantity solely, and not accent, as the basis of rhythm: there was a fashion for the thing at the time—a fashion that originated in the natural dissatisfaction of men who could read the classics, and the Italians, when they turned to the feeble productions of contemporary English verse—Spenser and Sidney (to mention two great poets) were caught by it for awhile, and experiments of each of them in the 'artificial versifying' are extant. Later in life Harvey, involved in disputes with very much acuter writers than himself, was mercilessly scoffed at for the tortures he had inflicted on his native tongue; but at the time we write of he was respected and beloved by his friends for his 'rare gifts of learning,' his 'gallant English verses,' and his taste and culture. Sidney's best work begins just after the close of this period; a little masque, 'The Lady of May,' and some small experiments and translations alone belong to it.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Fairy Queen' was already begun, as we know from a letter of Harvey's, in April, 1580. How much of it was written is, however, utterly unknown: the first three books did not appear till ten years later. Of Spenser's other work before 1580 (besides the 'Shepherd's Calendar'), we know that the bulk of what were afterwards published as the 'Visions of Bellay' and the 'Visions of Petrarch' (two short series of sonnets in the volume of 'Complaints') had been written by him in their first form in or before his seventeenth year. Other works (some perhaps never finished, some destroyed or lost, and some perhaps worked up into some of his known poems), which we hear of in or before 1580, are 'Dreams,' 'Legends,' 'Court of Cupid,' 'Stemmata Dudleiana,' 'Slumber,' 'Epithalamion Thonesis,' 'Dying Pelican,' and nine comedies. We only know of them from 'E. K.'s' introduction to the 'Shepherd's Calendar,' and from the correspondence that has been preserved between Harvey and Spenser.

<sup>3</sup> 'E. K.' spells it thus, deriving the word (incorrectly) from αἰγῶν or αἰγονόμων λόγῳ—that is 'Goatherds' tales.' This 'E. K.' was a close friend of Spenser's, and supervised the first edition of the 'Shepherd's Calendar,' to which he added a 'Gloss,' or commentary and introductions: he is generally identified with his college friend, E. Kirke. Some, however, have maintained that 'E. K.' was the poet himself.

his equals and companions, of his unfortunate folly, he compiled these twelve *Æglogues*, which, for that they be proportioned to the state of the twelve months, he termeth the "Shepherd's Calendar," applying an old name to a new work.' The 'pastoral' form which Spenser adopts had, as we have seen, been but little used by former English poets. Googe, as we know, had used it not long before Spenser, while Barclay and Turberville had made translations, etc.<sup>1</sup> On the genesis of the Elizabethan pastoral a very few words will suffice. It was one of the forms of writing whose transplantation to England was mainly due to the Renaissance and contact with Italy. Petrarch, in the fourteenth century, had imitated in Latin the Pastorals of Virgil, much as Virgil had imitated Theocritus. In the next century writers of pastorals in Italian as well as in Latin are more popular, notable among them being 'old Mantuan' (see p. 47). The pastoral writers of the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century increase in number and value; in Italy Sannazaro (1458-1532) is the most prominent name; in Spain (under Italian influence), Garcilaso (1503-1536); in France, Clement Marot (1497-1544), whom Spenser admired, translated, imitated, and perhaps did not excel.<sup>2</sup> Of the 'Shepherd's Calendar' itself little here is to be said, for it is a work which the student will study for himself: it is, perhaps, permissible to a reader who can make use of such a text-book as this to obtain his knowledge of Hawes or Gascoigne (to say nothing of less significant names) at second-hand, but his Spenser he must know, and know well, before he imagines he has any acquaintance with English literature.<sup>3</sup> To give a few notes, such as may be

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 14, 47. To Henryson is given the credit of the first English pastoral; see p. 16. Among Surrey's poems is one — 'The Complaint of a Dying Lover' — which 'is valuable as being after Henryson's "Robine and Makyne," the first pastoral poem in British literature' (Collins).

<sup>2</sup> On Eclogue i. ('January') of the 'Shepherd's Calendar,' 'E. K.' remarks: 'The word Colin is French, and used of the French poet Marot, if he be worthy of the name of a poet.' That alone is surely enough to make the theory that 'E. K.' was Spenser utterly untenable.

<sup>3</sup> There is a complete one-volume edition of Spenser's works, excellently edited by Dr. Morris and Professor Hales, in the Globe Series (Macmillan). A capital little edition of the 'Shepherd's Calendar' (with introduction) is to be found in Professor Morley's National Library (Cassell).

useful to read before studying the poems, is all that is attempted here. The *language* of the poem, it will be observed, is purposely archaic. Spenser 'laboured to restore, as to their rightful heritage, such good and natural English words as have been long time out of use and almost clean disinherited,' says 'E. K.' The poet was a lover and diligent student of Chaucer ('The God of Shepherd, Tityrus,' in Eclogue vi.), and got many of his old words from him; others, perhaps, from his residence in the north, or from a study of northern poets, for his diction abounds in distinctively northern forms; so fond is he of what seem to him quaint or rustical words, that a certain number of them are apparently of his own invention; to a certain extent, indeed, his language is a highly artificial one, for he has pieced it out from different dialects and selected constructions and phrases which date from different stages of the language: whether this be a blemish or not, it was not wholly approved by his own contemporaries;<sup>1</sup> but the student will bear in mind that Spenser's object, both in construction of his poems and choice of diction, etc., was to present a *vivider semblance* of 'goatherds' songs.' The proper names Spenser uses are typical of his diction in many ways: from classic sources we have Tityrus and Pan, Syrinx (Anne Bullen), Dido and Menalcas, the first two of whom serve as a kind of 'trade mark' of the pastoral; rustic or pseudo-rustic life gives us Piers, Cuddie, Diggon Davie, Lob, Hobbinoll (Harvey), and part of Colin Clout<sup>2</sup> (Spenser); Thenot is due to Marot, Elisa is shortened for the Queen's name; Morrell (Bishop Elmor, or Aylmer), Algrind (Archbishop Grindal), and Rosalind (the unidentified 'widow's daughter of the Glen'), are anagrams. Similarly, the eclogues show as much variety as possible of style, metre, and inspiration. 'January,' for instance, is a plaintive song of Colin Clout, who bewails Rosalind's scorn of his love; the metre is deca-

<sup>1</sup> 'The "Shepherd's Kalendar" hath much poesy in his eclogues, indeed worthy the reading, if I be not deceived. That same framing of his style to an old rustic language I dare not allow; since neither Theocritus in Greek, nor Virgil in Latin, nor Sannazaro in Italian, did affect it.'—Sidney's 'Apology for Poetry' (about 1581).

<sup>2</sup> Skelton's pseudonym, see p. 13. Colin occurs in Marot's eclogues.



syllabic, rhyming six-lined verse (*a b a b c c*). In 'February' we have a humorous dialogue (between Cuddie and Thenot) in rough, rhyming couplets, containing the story of the 'Oak and the Briar,' somewhat in Chaucer's manner. March ('Willie and Thomalin') has a pretty description of the shooting of 'the winged lad,' written in a tripping six-line metre (*a a b c c b*), and 'seemeth somewhat to resemble . . . Theocritus.' 'April' ('Thenot and Hobbinoll') abounds with classic allusions, and is elaborately artificial in metre and diction; it contains the beautiful 'song which Colin made in honour of her Majesty, whom abruptly he termeth Elisa,' and is one of the best of the collection. 'May' ('Palmode and Piers') shows Spenser (following Marot's example) as champion of the Reformed Church. In 'June' we have a continuation of 'January'; Rosalind has preferred Menalcas to Colin, and the latter pours out his lament in tuneful eight-lined stanzas (*a b a b b a b a*) to the devoted Hobbinoll. 'July' ('Thomalin and Morrell') is another religious pastoral, in which Spenser commends 'good shepherds' (such as Grindal, then in disgrace), as contrasted with 'Goatherds proud,' like Morrel (Aylmer); this time a four-lined stanza (*a b a b*) of alternate eight-syllable and six-syllable lines is used. 'August' will remind 'every schoolboy' of Virgil, who here imitated Theocritus: Willie and Perigot dispute for the supremacy in song, and Cuddie acts as umpire. In 'September' 'Diggon Davie' (who is said to be Vander Noodt, the Protestant refugee, who published Spenser's 'Visions' in his 'Miseries and Calamities that follow Voluptuous Worldlings,' etc.), describes to Hobbinoll (in couplets) the wickedness of Roman prelates. In 'October' ('Cuddie and Piers') we have the 'perfect pattern of a poet,' an imitation of Theocritus in a stately measure:

'O, peerless Poesie! where is then thy place?  
 If nor in Prince's palace thou dost sit,  
 (And yet is Prince's palace thee most fit,  
 No breast of baser birth doth thee embrace,  
 Then make thee wings of thine aspiring wit,  
 And whence thou cam'st fly back to heaven apace.'

‘ November ’ ( ‘ Thenot and Colin ’ —the lament for ‘ Dido ’) and ‘ December ’ ( ‘ Colin’s Complaint ’) are modelled on, and in part almost literally translated from, Marot.

The variety of the metres employed in the ‘ Shepherd’s Calendar ’ has been dwelt on at some length, because it seems that Spenser was trying his hand at various forms of verse, and partly showing what he could not do, as well as what he was destined to accomplish. Taken as a whole, the work seems generally to be considered to be a masterpiece, though no one will deny that some portions are poor; but whether we agree with those critics who maintain that had Spenser written nothing else ‘ The Shepherd’s Calendar ’ would entitle him to a place among the great English poets, or whether we consider it chiefly valuable as being the early work of the author of ‘ The Fairy Queen,’ we shall not fail to recognise in it passages of striking sweetness and melody, and (more rarely) of dignity and stateliness, nor to acknowledge the command over the harmonies of verse that its author possessed; nor shall we forget that it gained him the title of the ‘ new poet,’ and that its publication marks the beginning of the great age of Elizabethan poetry.

## CHAPTER VI.

### Prose Writers: Ascham and Lyly.

ASCHAM is the typical representative of the younger generation of the New Learning.<sup>1</sup> Educated at St. John's

Roger  
Ascham,  
1515-68.

College, Cambridge—he was elected to a fellowship in 1534—he threw himself with enthusiasm into the study of the classics, and has a place among the earlier teachers of Greek, which he had learned first from his contemporaries, Smith and Cheke. He was tutor to three sovereigns—Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth—and was highly respected and honoured for his learning and amiable disposition. Like most of the scholars of his own age, he was a Protestant, but, nevertheless, Mary (his pupil), on her accession to the throne, increased the pension granted to him by her father, and it was continued in the next two reigns until his death. Ascham's chief English writings are 'Toxophilus' (published in 1545) and 'The Schoolmaster,' published in 1570 by his widow.

'Toxophilus' and 'The Schoolmaster' will be found rather disappointing books to read, if the student has formed any estimate of them based on Ascham's reputation as a man of letters. The subject-matter of neither of them is of great interest, and considerable gift of literary expression or marked signs of anything more than moderate talent and considerable scholarship are not very evident. We must remember, however, that Ascham is among the earliest writers<sup>2</sup> of any note to use prose for purposes not merely controversial or declamatory, and that, considering the extreme scarcity of any-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 6, *note*.

<sup>2</sup> More's 'History of Richard III,' etc. (see p. 30, *note*), was not published till 1557: Elyot's style, however (see p. 32, *note*), does not suffer by comparison with Ascham's.



thing like good models of English prose before he wrote, we must not deny him credit for his plain, careful, and lucid writing, rigid and lacking in harmony as it is. 'Toxophilus,' dialogues between a book-lover ('Philologus') and an amateur archer ('Toxophilus'), in which Ascham dwells on the advantages of the bow as the national weapon (which it was fast ceasing to be), the fit implement for the student's exercise, the foe to unmanly and immoral games, etc., has a preface in which occurs the following passage, which is a fair specimen of Ascham's style, and will impress on the student's memory the chief ground for the high estimation in which Ascham stands—his use of English at a time when, both as scholar and man of culture, it would have been, as he says, 'more profitable for my study and also more honest for my name' to write Latin :

'If any man would blame me, either for taking such a matter in hand, or else for writing it in the English tongue, this answer I may make him, that when the best of the realm think it honest for them to use, I, one of the meanest sort, ought not to suppose it vile for me to write ; and though to have written it in another tongue had been both more profitable for my study, and also more honest for my name, yet I can think my labour well bestowed, if with a little hindrance of my profit and name, may come any furtherance to the pleasure or commodity of the gentlemen and yeomen of England, for whose sake I took this matter in hand. . . . *And as for the Latin and Greek tongue every thing is so excellently done in them that no man can do better ; in the English tongue, contrary, every thing in a manner so meanly both for the matter and handling, that no man can do worse.* For therein the least learned, for the most part, have been always most ready to write. And they which had least hope in Latin have been most bold in English : when surely every man that is most ready to talk is not most able to write. He that will write well in any tongue must follow this judgment of Aristotle, to speak as the common people do, to think as wise men do. . . . Many English writers have not done so, but using strange words, as Latin, French, and Italian, do make all things dark and hard.'<sup>1</sup>

In 'Toxophilus' there are frequent digressions upon

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Wilson, who published an 'Art of Rhetoric' (*i.e.*, 'A Handbook of English Composition') in 1553, bids us take care 'that we never affect any strange ink-horn terms, but to speak as is commonly received. . . . Some,' he adds, 'seek so far for outlandish English that they forget altogether their mother's language . . . and yet these fine English clerks will say they speak in their mother-tongue, if a man should charge them with counterfeiting the King's English.' Wilson has more merit than that of merely protesting against affectation : he not only lays down sensible laws for English writing, but to a certain extent exemplifies

morals, as there are in 'The Schoolmaster,' a book which deals with the teaching and study of Latin and the education of children. Ascham's kindly views as to impropriety of brutal treatment, and the advantages of training them by love rather than fear, are set forth, and show him in a very pleasant light, while his ideas about the method of teaching languages are extremely sensible. In the course of the book he inveighs against the practice of young Englishmen of wealth travelling in Italy—a point on which his advice had been asked by Sir Richard Sackville, by whose encouragement the book was written—a custom which Lyly's 'Euphues,' of which we are about to treat, enlarges against. The name 'Euphues,'<sup>1</sup> and the section of the book which deals with education ('Euphues and his Ephebus'), were also suggested by 'The Schoolmaster.'

Lyly<sup>2</sup> is a person of some importance in the history of our literature, as being practically the first of the Elizabethan novel-writers, and having set a fashion to (or at least brought into prominence a fashion notable in) the prose-writers of his time. The scanty details of his life which are known are somewhat as follows: He was a native of Kent, and studied at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he took his degree in 1573. He spent most of his life about the court, for which his plays were written; petitions of his, seeking for pension or other reward, are extant, but

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them. He has more command over the language than Ascham, and his style is not so repellantly wooden. Wilson also published an 'Art of Logie,' and translated parts of Demosthenes. He died in 1581, the year preceding the appearance of a more powerful plea for the proper use of English in Richard Mulcaster's 'Elementary,' a work on the education of the young: 'Is it not a marvellous bondage to become servants to one tongue for learning's sake, the most part of our time, with loss of most time; whereas we may have the very same treasure in our own tongue with gain of most time? Our own bearing the joyful title of our liberty and freedom, and the Latin tongue remembering us of our thraldom and bondage? I love Rome, but London better; I favour Italy, but England more; I honour the Latin, but I worship the English. . . . I do not think that any language, be it whatsoever, is better able to utter all arguments, either with more pith or greater plainness, than our English tongue is.' Mulcaster's faith in his native tongue—cultivated classic scholar as he was—was demonstrated to be fully justified, long before his death in 1611, by (among many others) one who had been his pupil at Merchant Taylors'—the author of 'The Fairy Queen.'

<sup>1</sup> Ascham says that a child fit for proper training must be, among other things, *cōpōn*, according to 'the wisest man that learning maketh mention of . . . Socrates in Plato.

<sup>2</sup> The name is also spelt Lillie (Lily), a spelling which will remind the student of the proper pronunciation.

whether he ever got any is unknown : his reputation, at any rate, was very great.

Lyly's chief work is 'Euphues,' *i.e.*, 'Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit' (1579), and 'Euphues and his England' (1580)—which is described by Hallam as 'a very dull story,' and by Kingsley as 'as brave, righteous, and pious a book as a man need look into:' both of these remarks seem to be perfectly true. Lyly's 'Euphues' is a young gentleman of fortune, a native of 'Athens' (*i.e.*, London), who travels in Italy after the fashion so condemned in 'The Schoolmaster.' The story itself demands little attention: the book is taken up chiefly with moralizings on various subjects, in the form of discourses, letters, and exhortations on love, religion, education, etc.: these are hung on to a meagre skeleton of incident, more or less connected with Euphues' travels: in the first part we have Euphues' friendship with Philantus, and their love-adventures with Lucilla, the daughter of the Governor of Naples, ending with the return of Euphues to the University of Athens; in the second part ('Euphues and his England') Euphues comes to England, bringing Philantus with him; finally he returns to Athens again to his cell at Silexedra,<sup>1</sup> leaving his friend Philantus happily married. Such is the matter of the book; let us look at his style—the style which attracted so much attention, and has given a word to the language. Here is a specimen in which Lyly's peculiarities are fairly well marked:

'Thou takest it heavily that thou shouldst be accused without colour and exiled without cause; and I think thee happy to be so well rid of the court and be so void of crime. Thou sayst banishment is bitter to the free-born, and I deem it the better if thou be without blame. There be many meats which are sour in the mouth and sharp in the maw, but if thou mingle them with sweet sauces they yield both a pleasant taste and wholesome nourishment. Divers colours offend the eye, yet having green among them whet the sight. I speak this to this end, that though thy exile seem grievous to thee, yet guiding thyself with the rules of philosophy it shall be more tolerable; he that is cold doth not cover himself with care, but with clothes: he that is washed in the rain dryeth himself by the fire, not by his fancy; and thou which art ban-

<sup>1</sup> Lyly's contemporaries drew 'Euphues' out of his cell again often enough: for the next few years most of the novels of the day pretend to some connection with him.



ished oughtest not with tears to bewail thy hap, but with wisdom to heal thy hurt.'

The characteristics of Lyly's style are his love of antithesis, which he carries to such an extent that he seems almost unable to make the simplest statement without contrasting it with, or balancing it by, another; an inordinate fondness for similitudes and parallels drawn from mythology, biography, and the natural science of the time, whereto Lyly is suspected of having made certain additions from the stores of his own imagination; a delight in the repetition of the same word (often for the sake of the antithesis), and in alliteration, and other jingling ornaments. The chief merit of Lyly's style is well stated by Professor Minto:<sup>1</sup> 'His sentences are remarkably free from intricacy and inversion, much shorter, more pithy and direct than was usual. We must come down at least a century before we find a structure so lucid. To be sure, his matter was not heavy, and did not tempt him to use either weighty sentences or learned terms—still, credit to whom credit is due; his sentences, as sentences, though not in perfect modern form, are the most smooth and finished of that time. His chief fault is the want of variety,'—a uniformity of length and cadence in his periods, which increases the monotony produced by their obviously and mechanically artificial character. But what is known as "Euphuism"—viz., the tricks and affectations of Lyly's style—was not invented by Lyly, for we may find indications of it in earlier writers, even as far back as Berners, and "Euphues" itself has been regarded as modelled in style and subject on the Spanish "Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius" of Antonio Guevara,<sup>2</sup> while from Lyly's preface we know that the Italinatè Englishmen of his day "desire to hear *finer* speech than their language will allow"; but the mannerisms known as "Euphuistic" were carried by Lyly to their highest pitch, and, indeed, we may look upon Lyly as having given death rather than birth to them, for he and his immediate imitators worked them so hard that the public and the writers very

<sup>1</sup> 'Manual of English Prose Literature,' pp. 228-9.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 58.

little later than Lyly grew sick of them, and would have no more. Even Lyly's merits of style (according to Professor Minto) produced no fruit: "his lucid neatness of sentence and orderly way of producing instances perished with his worthless affectations. English style immediately after him was not less prolix and intricate, nor less overburdened with clumsy quotations." <sup>1</sup>

We have seen a number of translators of the classic poetry and drama at work (Chap. V.): the prose translators must also not be passed over. Chief among these is Sir Thomas North, who in 1579 published a translation (from the French of Jacques Amyot) of 'Plutarch's Lives,' and this was Shakespeare's Plutarch—the book on which his 'Julius Cæsar' and the other Roman plays were founded. 'An earlier work of North's—the "Dial of Princes," a translation of Guevara's "El Libro de Marco Aurelio," published in 1557—is still more interesting for the history of prose style. It throws strong light on the derivation of Lyly's "Euphuism." There are passages in it which might pass for Lyly's.' <sup>2</sup> Translators of the Italian novels also appear, some of whom have already been mentioned: others are William Painter, whose 'Palace of Pleasure' (1566-69) was a collection of tales from Boccaccio and Biondello, which Shakespeare <sup>3</sup> and other Elizabethan dramatists made use of, and George Whetstone, of one of whose plays, 'Promos and Cassandra,' an account is given on p. 63. A book of another kind which must have formed part of Shakespeare's 'library' is Ralph Holinshed's 'Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland,' which first appeared in 1577, and incorporated the work of several other writers.

<sup>1</sup> Lyly's other works do not fall within the scope of this chapter: they are nine plays, chiefly in prose—'Alexander and Campaspe,' 'Endymion,' 'Mother Bomble,' etc.—written between the years 1580-90.

<sup>2</sup> Minto's 'English Prose Literature.'

<sup>3</sup> E.g., Biondello's tales, in one form or another, contributed more or less to the plot of the following of Shakespeare's plays: 'Two Gentlemen of Verona' (Barnabe Riche, 1581), 'Romeo and Juliet' (in Painter's 'Palace of Pleasure,' and in Arthur Brooke's poem, 'Romeus and Juliet,' 1562, based on the same story), 'Much Ado' (taken indirectly from a novel of Belleforest's, after Biondello—there is a similar story in Turberville's 'Genevra'), etc. (see Mr. Fleay's 'Shakespeare Manual,' whence these particulars are taken).

## CHAPTER VII.

### The Tudor Drama, down to 1580.

IN Chapter IV. (p. 34) an attempt was made to give the student a general idea of the state of the drama before and during the period with which this chapter deals: to this a few remarks on certain typical productions of a dramatic kind, written between 1485 and 1580, are here added.

Heywood's interlude of the 'Four P's' will serve as an example of this kind of dramatic composition. The matter of the play is, as usual in an interlude, the dialogue arising out of one incident—in this case a dispute as to which of three of the 'P's' ('Poticary, Pardoner, and Palmer) can tell the biggest lie, the fourth 'P' (Pedlar) being appointed judge. The 'Poticary begins moderately well by calling the Pedlar an honest man, but the Pedlar does not allow this falsehood to count—being perhaps prejudiced on the point—and bids them each tell (in the form of a narrative apiece) a specimen lie. The 'Poticary has a story of a marvellous cure, which is beaten by the Pardoner's tale of his rescue of a soul from hell—a woman's soul, which the devil was glad to part with, beseeching its rescuer to

'Apply thy pardons to women so,  
That unto us there come no mo.'

The Palmer expresses much marvel at the fact that women can cause such trouble below: for his part, he has been in every good city, town, or borough of Christendom,



and seen some five hundred thousand women in the course of his life, yet, he adds,

‘I never saw nor knew in my conscience,  
Any one woman out of patience.’

He wins easily.

Nicholas Udall<sup>1</sup> has the distinction of having written the first regular English comedy. ‘A Comedy, or Interlude,’ is the description of it in his prologue, but it has little in common with those of the latter class, of which we have just spoken. Udall was a scholar, and a lover of the Latin drama; he had written several comedies, and also a tragedy, in Latin, which are now lost, and he had edited selections of Terence for schoolboys. In the prologue to ‘Ralph Roister Doister’ he directly appeals to the authority of ‘the wise poets, long time heretofore . . . Plautus and Terence,’ whose ‘merry comedies . . . *among the learned* at this day bear the bell.’ His play is divided into acts and scenes, and is written in rhyming couplets, the normal line containing, as a rule, twelve syllables; the action is cleverly developed, the dialogue is on the whole sprightly, and the plot<sup>2</sup> is not much thinner than what we are accustomed to in modern nineteenth-century comedy. The *dramatis personæ* have the great merit of being ‘alive,’ and are as far removed from the speaking

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 15: the play is known to have been written not later than 1553 (being quoted in a book published in that year), and may perhaps have been written several years earlier.

<sup>2</sup> Here is an epitome of it: Ralph Roister Doister, a cowardly coxcomb—a sort of sixteenth-century Bob Acres—wishes to marry the widow Christian Custance, and persecutes her with his ridiculous addresses. Mathew Merygreke, a puckish parasite, who is content to live on Ralph as much for the fun he gets out of him as for more substantial reasons, is his mischievous counsellor and messenger, and makes Ralph appear even more contemptible in the eyes of the widow than the fop’s conduct deserves; an example of this is the way in which Mathew reads aloud Ralph’s loving letter, altering the punctuation so as to entirely reverse the sense—a device which calls to mind the mechanics’ prologue of the ‘Pyramus and Thisbe’ play in the ‘*Midsummer Night’s Dream*.’ The widow’s betrothed—Master Gawin Goodluck—hearing through his man, Sim Suresby, of Ralph’s wooing, is rendered suspicious. The widow resolves to show him the groundlessness of his jealousy, and at the same time to punish her persecutor: a trap is laid (by the help of Mathew) for Ralph, who comes to conquer her surrounded by his serving-men, and is ingloriously beaten by the widow and her maids. The play closes with preparations for the marriage of Gawin and the widow, who good-humouredly allow the fool Ralph to be reconciled to them.

automatons of the interlude as they are from the personified abstractions of the morality. We do not, of course, find their characters distinguished by any subtle complexity, but this (apart from the age in which the play was written) we shall not look for in farcical comedy. The minor characters—*e.g.*, Tib Talkapace (the saucy maid), Sim Suresby (Gawin's faithful and thick-headed man), Madge Mumblecrust (the widow's ancient nurse)—are distinguished by masterly touches, and there is a completeness in the conception and execution of the whole—a completeness bred of faithful adherence to classic models—which is wanting in many later works that show far more genius. The three or four songs in the play are appropriate and pretty.<sup>1</sup>

The first regular English tragedy,<sup>2</sup> like the first English comedy, was written by scholars on a classic model, and for the entertainment of a cultured audience. 'Gorboduc,' or 'Ferrex and Porrex,' was the work of Sackville, the author of the 'Induction' (see p. 41), and one Thomas Norton:<sup>3</sup> it was acted for the first time early in 1562, by and before members of the Inner Temple, to which both its authors belonged.<sup>4</sup> The plot of the play is thus summed up in the original 'argument': 'Gorboduc, King of Britain, divided his realms in his lifetime to his sons, Ferrex and Porrex. The sons fell to dissension. The younger (Porrex) killed the elder. The mother (Videna), that more dearly loved the elder (Ferrex), for revenge killed the younger. The people, moved with the cruelty

<sup>1</sup> A play which was at one time supposed to be the first regular English comedy is the 'Gammer Gurton's Needle' of Bishop Still, printed in 1575, and written perhaps ten years earlier. It is a gross farcical piece of no great merit, except in the famous drinking-song, 'Back and side go bare, go bare,' which does not appear to have been of Still's composition.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Preston's 'Cambyses' may perhaps have been produced about the same time: it is a mixture of comedy and tragedy of a ranting kind, with a strong flavour of the old morality about it: the 'Vice' of the morality, the ancestor of the Shakespearian fool, figures in it, as in some later plays. Among the *dramatis personæ* are 'Shame,' 'Diligence,' 'Cruelty,' and so forth.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Norton (1532-84) is not otherwise notable. He published some translations of no account, and had some hand in the version of the Psalms begun by Thomas Sternhold (d. 1549) and completed by John Hopkins, which appeared in 1562.

<sup>4</sup> It is to be observed that most of the early Elizabethan men of letters were University and Inns of Court men.

of the fact, rose in rebellion, and slew both father and mother. The nobility assembled, and most terribly destroyed the rebels; and afterwards, for want of issue of the prince, whereby the succession of the crown became uncertain, they fell to civil war,' etc. The play is divided into acts and scenes, and written for the most part in stiff blank verse, of which the following is a favourable specimen. Marcella, one of the Queen's women, is describing to Gorboduc the murder of Porrex:

'The noble prince, pierced with his sudden wound,  
 Out of his wretched slumber hastily start,  
 Whose strength now failing straight he overthrew,  
 When, in the fall, his eyes e'en now unclosed  
 Beheld the queen, and cried to her for help.  
 We then, alas ! the ladies which that time  
 Did there attend, seeing that heinous deed,  
 And hearing him oft call the wretched name  
 Of mother, and to cry to her for aid  
 Whose direful hand gave him the mortal wound,  
 Pitying (alas ! for nought else could we do)  
 His ruthful end, ran to the woeful bed,  
 Despoiled straight his breast, and all we might  
 Wiped in vain, with napkins next at hand,  
 The sudden streams of blood that flushèd fast  
 Out of the gaping wound. O, what a look !  
 O what a ruthful steadfast eye me thought  
 He fixed upon my face ! which to my death  
 Will never part from me, when with a braid,  
 A deep-fetched sigh he gave, and therewithal,  
 Clasping his hands, to heaven he cast his sight ;  
 And straight, pale death pressing within his face,  
 The flying ghost his mortal corpse forsook.'<sup>1</sup>

There is a dumb-show before each act, representing by simple pantomime the 'argument' of what is next to appear on the stage,<sup>2</sup> and a chorus in rhyming verse ends the act. The speeches of the characters are inordinately long—Eubulus, the sententious councillor, for instance, concludes the fifth act with a speech of a hundred lines—and the gloom of the author of the 'Induction,' with-

<sup>1</sup> This is from Act iv. The first three acts are said to be by Norton, and the last two by Sackville.

<sup>2</sup> This 'dumb show' is *not* in the Senecan originals.



out his genius, seems to lie over the whole work ; one is inclined to think that the audience who enjoyed it must have taken their pleasure very sadly. Hazlitt's criticism on it seems very just, on the whole : ' This tragedy, considered as the first in our language, is certainly a curiosity, and in other respects it is also remarkable.<sup>1</sup> As a work of genius, it may be set down as nothing, for it hardly contains a memorable line or passage ; as a work of art, it may be considered as a monument to the taste and skill of the authors. Its merit is confined to the regularity of the plot and metre, to its general good sense and strict attention to decorum.'

The 'Jocasta' of Gascoigne<sup>2</sup> (and Kinwelmersh) may fitly follow the mention of 'Gorboduc.' Like this, it was in blank verse, and had a chorus after the acts and dumb-show before them ; like it, too, it followed a classic model, but it was little more than mere translation of an Italian 'Giocasta,' which was itself an adaptation of Euripides' 'Phœnissæ.' Like 'Gorboduc,' it was produced by and for the members of one of the Inns of Court, being first acted at Gray's Inn in 1666.

At Gray's Inn in the same year another of Gascoigne's translations was produced—'The Supposes,' a prose comedy (apparently the first prose comedy in English), taken from Ariosto.<sup>3</sup>

A play in two parts, taken from an Italian source, but showing more originality than either of the foregoing, is George Whetstone's 'Promos and Cassandra,' based on the same story as Shakespeare used in 'Measure for Measure,'<sup>4</sup> from the 'Hundred Tales' of Giraldi Cinthio.

<sup>1</sup> 'The political maxims are grave and profound,' says Hallam. The object of the play is to show the evils of divided rule and the necessity of the succession to the crown being fixed. The story is 'borrowed from our fabulous British legends' as they appear in Geoffrey of Monmouth : the dramatists altered it only slightly.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> 'The original had been first published in prose, 1525, and from this Gascoigne took his translation, adopting some of the changes Ariosto had introduced when he turned it into verse ; but he has inserted little of his own' (Hallam). Ariosto's play is in the fashion of the Latin comedy, being modelled on Plautus and Terence.

<sup>4</sup> Whetstone's play, printed in 1578, had been 'never presented upon the stage ; when he produced his collection of prose tales, the 'Heptameron of Civil Discourses,' in 1582, which includes the 'Promos and Cassandra' tale in prose.

It is in rhyming verse, sometimes in couplets, more often in the decasyllable four-line stanzas Shakespeare uses only in his earliest plays: here are a few lines from *Whetstone* which the student may compare with the interview between Claudio and Isabella in 'Measure for Measure' (Act iii., Sc. i.): it is Andrugio (Claudio) urging Cassandra (Isabella) to save his life by complying with the desire of Promos (Angelo):

‘Nay, sweet sister, more slander would infame  
Your spotless life, to reave your brother’s breath,  
When you have power for to enlarge the same,  
Once in your hand doth lie my life and death.  
Weigh that I am the self-same flesh you are,  
Think I once gone the house will go to wrack;  
Know forcèd faults for slander need not care;  
Look you for blame if I fail through your lack.  
Consider well my great extremity.  
If otherwise this doom I could revoke,  
I would not spare for any jeopardy  
To free thee, wench, from this same heavy yoke.’

## SYNOPSIS AND INDEX OF AUTHORS.

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CHURCHYARD, Thomas (?1520-1604). Contributor to <i>Tottel's Miscellany</i> , also wrote the tragedies of <i>Wolsey</i> and <i>Jane Shore</i> in the <i>Mirror for Magistrates</i> (1559), and translated the three first books of <i>Ovid de Tristibus</i> .	40, 45
COLET, John (1466-1519). Wrote a <i>Latin Grammar</i> with Lilly and Erasmus, and theological works, etc. See note on p. -	6
COVERDALE, Miles (1485-1565). <i>A complete version of the Bible in English</i> (1535), and <i>Cromwell's Bible</i> (1539), and various tracts, etc. See note on p. -	7
CRANMER, Thomas—Archbishop (1489-1556). Superintended the translation of the <i>Bible</i> which bears his name, to which he wrote a <i>Prologue</i> (1540); various theological writings. See note on p. -	7
DOLMAN, John. A contributor to the <i>Mirror for Magistrates</i> -	45
DUNBAR, William (? 1460-1520). <i>The Golden Targe, The Thrissil and the Rois, The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins, Lament for the Makars</i> (printed 1508), <i>The Two Married Women and the Widow, Tidings fra the Sessions, The Justes between the Tailyour and the Souter, The Friars of Berwick</i> , and many other poems -	16
DOUGLAS, Gawain (1474-1522). Translation of <i>Æneid</i> , with original Prologues (completed 1513); translation of Ovid's <i>Art of Love</i> (lost), <i>The Paluce of Honour</i> (circ. 1500), an allegorical poem, and <i>King Hart</i> , also an allegory -	18
EDWARDS, Richard (d. 1560). Author of much of the verse in <i>The Paradise of Dainty Devices</i> (published 1576), and of plays ( <i>Damon and Pythias, Palamon and Arcyte</i> , etc.)	41
ELYOT, Sir Thomas (?1495-1546). <i>The Governor</i> (1531), <i>The Castle of Health, A Preservative against Death</i> , a <i>Latin-English Dictionary</i> , etc. See note on p. -	32
FABYAN, Robert (d. 1512). <i>A Concordance of [English] Histories</i> , from Brut to the end of the fifteenth century. See note on p. -	30
FERRERS, George (d. 1579). Translated <i>Magna Charta</i> and other statutes, composed interludes for the Court, contributed <i>The Fall of Tresilian, King Richard II.</i> , and several other poems to the <i>Mirror for Magistrates</i> -	45
FOXÉ, John (1517-1587). <i>Acts and Monuments of the Church</i> , commonly known as <i>Foxe's Book of Martyrs</i> (1562), and various other works.	

- GASCOIGNE, George (1535-1577). *The Supposes*, a prose comedy (1566), *Jocasta*, a tragedy (with Kinwelmersh), produced 1566; *Certain Notes of Instruction concerning the making of Verse or Rime in English*; *The Steel Glass*, a blank verse satire (1576); *The Lullaby*, *Arraignment of a Lover*, poems, translations and adaptations, etc. - 45
- GROCYN, William (1442-1522). See p. - - 5
- GOOGE, Barnaby (1540-1594). *Eclogues*, *Epitaphs* and *Sonnets* (1563), translations from Latin, Italian and Spanish, and original poems - - 47
- GOLDING, Arthur (d. 1590). Translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* into English verse, and of Cæsar's *Commentaries* (1565). See note on p. - - 47
- GOSSON, Stephen (1554-1623). His *School of Abuse*, an attack upon the stage, appeared in 1579, and was answered by Thomas Lodge in his *Reply to the School of Abuse* in the same year. Gosson's book was dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, and was perhaps the cause of the latter's *Apology for Poetry*, which was probably written in 1581, but was not published till 1595, several years after its author's death.
- GRIMALD, Nicholas (? 1520-1561). Probably editor of *Tottel's Miscellany*, to which he contributed among other poems *The Death of Zoroas* and *The Death of Cicero* in blank verse. Also translated from Latin *Cicero's de Officiis*, etc. - - 39
- HALL, Edward (1500-1547). History of the *Union of the Two Noble and Illustrious Families of Lancaster and York*. See note on p. - - 30
- HARVEY, Gabriel (1545-1630). See note on p. - - 48
- HAWES, Stephen (1483-1520). *The Pastime of Pleasure* (1506), *The Conversion of Swearers*, *The Example of Virtue*, *A Joyful Meditation of all England*, etc. - 10
- HENRYSON, Robert (d. before 1508). Scotch poet. *Robyn and Makyn*, *Fables*, *Testament of Fair Cresseid*, *Garmand of Fair Ladies*, etc. - - 16
- HEYWOOD, Jasper (1535-1598). Contributor to *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*. Translated some of Seneca's plays into English verse (1560-1561). See note on p. - 41
- HEYWOOD, John (1506-1565). Writer of interludes. *A Play of Love*, *The Four P's*, *Johan the Husband*, *Tygh his Wife*, and *St. Johan the Prestyr*. See note on p. 15 - 59
- HIGGINS, John. *A First Part of the Mirror for Magistrates* (1574) - - 45
- HOLINSHED, Ralph (d. about 1580). *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1577). - - 58

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HOPKINS, John. Completed Sternhold's version of the <i>Psalms</i> (1562). See note on p. - - -	61
HOWARD, HENRY [see 'Surrey'].	
HUNNIS, William. Contributor to <i>The Paradise of Dainty Devices</i> - - -	41
JEWEL, John—Bishop of Salisbury (1522-1571). <i>Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae</i> (1562), <i>A Defence of the Apology, Sermons</i> , etc.	
KENNEDY, Walter (d. about 1500). A poem <i>In Praise of Age, Inveictive against Mouththanklessness</i> . See note on p. - - -	18
KINWELMERSH, Francis. Collaborator with Gascoigne in the <i>Jocasta</i> , and contributor to <i>The Paradise of Dainty Devices</i> . See note on p. - - -	41
KNOX, John (1505-1572). <i>First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women</i> (1558), <i>A History of the Reformation of Religion within the Realm of Scotland</i> , and numerous polemical works.	
LATIMER, Hugh—Bishop of Worcester (1491-1555). <i>Sermons</i>	32
LEE, Edward—Bishop (1482-1544). <i>Annotations on the Greek Testament of Erasmus</i> (1520), <i>Commentary on the Pentateuch</i> , etc. See note on p. - - -	6
LELAND, John (?1506-1552). <i>Itinerary</i> . See note on p. -	31
LILLY, William (?1468-1523). Master of St. Paul's School. Author of a <i>Latin Grammar</i> , in conjunction with Erasmus and Colet. See note on p. - - -	6
LINACRE, Thomas (?1460-1524). Translation of <i>Galen</i> (1521). See note on p. - - -	6
LYLY, John (1553-1606) <i>Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit</i> (1579), and <i>Euphues and his England</i> (1580), and other works after 1580 - - -	55
LYNDESAY, Sir David (1490-1558). <i>The Dreme</i> (1528), a didactic political satiric allegory; <i>The Complaynt</i> (1529), a personal petition to the king and denunciation of the clergy; <i>Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis</i> , a morality play; <i>The Monarchie</i> (circ. 1552), a chronicle in verse; <i>The Complaynt of the Kinge's Papyngo</i> , and <i>The Testament of the Papyngo</i> (1530), satires on the clergy; <i>The Historie of Squier Meldrum</i> , a humorous metrical romance; <i>Kittie's Confession</i> , etc. - - -	20
MAIR (Major), John (1469-1550). Professor of Divinity at St. Andrews. Wrote (in Latin) theological and moral treatises, and <i>A History of Great Britain</i> , in six books (1521).	
<i>Mirror for Magistrates</i> . See p. 44.	



- MORE, Sir Thomas (1480-1535). *Utopia*, written in Latin (1516); *History of the Life and Death of Edward V. . . . and of Richard III.* (before 1509); *Dialogue concerning Heresies* (1529), *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, and many other controversial works - - - 27
- MUNDAY, Anthony (d. 1633). Contributor to *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* - - - 41
- NEVILLE, Alexander. One of the Elizabethan translators of Seneca's plays. See note on p. - - - 41
- NEWTON, Thomas. Completed the translation of Seneca's plays (1580-1581). See note on p. - - - 41
- NORTH, Sir Thomas. *Dial of Princes*, from the Spanish of Guevara (1557); translation of *Plutarch's Lives* (1579) - 58
- NORTON, Thomas (1532-1584). Part author with Sackville of *Gorboduc* (1562); also wrote translations, and contributed to Sternhold and Hopkins' version of the *Psalms* (pub. 1562). See note on p. - - - 61
- NUCE, Thomas. One of the Elizabethan translators of Seneca's plays. See note on p. - - - 41
- OXFORD, Earl of (1545-1604). Contributor to *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* - - - 41
- PAINTER, William. *Palace of Pleasure*, translations of tales from Boccaccio and Biondello (1566-1569) - - 58
- PHAER, Thomas (d. 1560). Translated large part of the *Æneid* into verse, also contributed to the *Mirror for Magistrates*, and wrote on law and medicine - - - 45
- PRESTON, Thomas (1537-98). *Cambyses*, a play (?156-). See note on p. - - - 61
- PROCTOR, Thomas. Compiler of *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1578) - - - 41
- ROBINSON, Ralph. Published a translation of More's *Utopia* in 1551. See note on p. - - - 27
- ROGERS, John (d. 1555). Edited the version of Coverdale's translation, known as *Matthew's Bible* (1537). See note on p. - - - 7
- ROY, William. A helper of Tyndale in his translation of the *New Testament* (1525), and writer of various satires in rough verse, e.g., *The Burying of the Mass* (1528) - 7
- SACKVILLE, Thomas (1538-1608). *Gorboduc*, a tragedy, written with Thomas Norton (1562); *Induction to the Complaint of the Duke of Buckingham*, and *The Complaint of the Duke of Buckingham* (1563), in the *Mirror of Magistrates*, pp. - - - 41, 61
- SIDNEY, Sir Philip (1554-1586). *Lady of May*, etc. His best work was not done before 1580. See note on p. - 48

- SKELTON, John (b. circ. 1460, d. 1529). *Phyllip Sparrowe* (before 1508), *The Boke of Colyn Clout*, *Why come ye not to Court?* *Ware the Hawk*, *The Tunning of Elinore Rummyng*, *Magnificence*, *The Bowge of Court*, *Speke Parrot*, *The Nigramansir*, etc. - - - 13
- SMITH, Sir Thomas (1514-1579). Greek lecturer at Cambridge (1533), and with Cheke introduced the new pronunciation of Greek, etc. See note on p. - - 6
- SPENSER, Edmund (?1552-1599). *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1579), and other works before 1580, which have either perished, were never finished, or were re-shaped - 47
- STERNHOLD, Thomas (d. 1549). Began a version of the *Psalms*, completed by John Hopkins in 1562. See note on p. - - - 61
- STILL, Bishop. *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, a farcical comedy (pub. 1575). See note on p. - - - 61
- STOW, John (1525-1605). *A Summary of English Chronicles* (1561), *Annales, or a General Chronicle of England from Brute unto this present year of Christ* (1580).
- STUDLEY, John. One of the Elizabethan translators of Seneca's plays. See note on p. - - - 41
- SURREY, Henry Howard, Earl of (1518-1547). Translated *Certain books of the Æneis* into blank verse, and wrote poems which appeared in *Tottel's Miscellany* (*Songs and Sonnets*), published in 1557 - - - 25
- Taverner's Bible*, a revision of Matthew's (1539). See note on p. - - - 7
- Tottel's Miscellany*. See p. - - - 39
- TURBERVILLE, George (1530-1600). Translations of *Eclogues of Mantuan*, *Heroical Epistles of Ovid*, Italian novels (*Genevra*, etc.), and original compositions - 47
- TUSSER, Thomas (1515-1580). *Hundred Good Points of Husbandry* (1557) and *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry* (1573) in verse, etc.
- TYNDALE, William (1480-1536). *Translation of the New Testament* (pub. 1525-1526), and of the *Pentateuch* (1530). *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, *The Practice of Prelates*, *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, and other controversial religious works - - - 31
- UDALL, Nicholas (1506-1556). *Ralph Roister Doister* (?155—), etc. See note on p. 15, and see p. - - - 60
- VAUX, Thomas, Lord (1510-1557). Wrote poems which appear in *Tottel's Miscellany* and in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (pub. 1576) - - - 40
- VERGIL, Polydore (d. 1555). *An English Chronicle* (in Latin). See note on p. - - - 19

WHITTINGHAM, William, was one of the translators of the <i>Geneva Bible</i> , published 1560. See note on p.	-	-	7
WHETSTONE, George. <i>Promos and Cassandra</i> , a play (pub. 1578); <i>Heptameron of Civil Discourses</i> (1582)	-	-	63
WILSON, Thomas (d 1581). <i>An Art of Rhetoric</i> , a hand-book of English composition (1553); an <i>Art of Logic</i> , and translations of <i>Demosthenes</i> . See note on p.	-	-	54
WYATT, Sir Thomas (1503-1542). Three satires, viz., <i>Of the Mean and Sure Estate, Of the Courtier's Life</i> , and <i>How to Use the Court and Himself Therein</i> , and a number of other poems. <i>Penitential Psalms, Love Sonnets, Complaints</i> , etc., published after his death, in <i>Tottel's Miscellany</i> (1557)	-	-	23





*Sept., 1890.*



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